# INDIAN MUSIC
# Today

By

S. K. CHAUBEY, M. A.

KITAB MAHAL
ALLAHABAD

*To*
*Aftabe-musiqi Ustad Faiyaz Khan*
*My Guru*
*to whom I owe everything*
*for*
*my love and understanding of Indian Music.*

# PREFACE

Like Indian Literature and Indian Art, Indian Music is a product of ages. It has to be seen in the perspective of Indian history. It is a vital part of Indian culture, because for centuries it mirrored cultural changes. It has always reproduced an important phase of our cultural life. But during its historic march, it has passed through many vicissitudes. It has surrendered to change, but it has also resisted it in a heroic manner. The sociological impact on Indian music has not been a constant factor. But social and economic changes have been reflected in its growth and development. In some measure, it has interpreted the temper of the age. Though it has always maintained its classical aloofness with a constant aversion to popular changes. It has played a tremendous role in the emotional and spiritual life of a whole people.

While modern Indian music is a spiritual inheritance of the past, its heritage has been shaped by succeeding generations. Today in this age of vast changes, when conflicting art-theories and art-forms usher in fresh and con-

fusing problems, Indian music is adapting itself to change with a discretion which is worthy of its classical tradition. But, to say the least, it is fighting desperately to preserve its life and tradition. It is fighting desperately against anti-classical and anti-Indian tendencies in modern music. It is constantly making an attempt to show its judicious contempt for fresh innovations and new experiments. Though, it welcomes healthy change, it is averse to cheap compromises.

It is impossible for any serious student of modern Indian music to divorce it from the context of modern life. Never was Indian music confronted with so many baffling problems as today. It can no more be a monopoly of its sequestered grooves of learning. Modern music is not without its adult franchise. The great sweeping changes which have occurred during the last three or four decades cannot escape our notice. The age of Dhrupad and Veena has gone. The age of romantic Khyal has not come to an end, but its final consummation is slowly dying out. The graceful forms of Thumri and Dadra are losing their original charm. The folk varieties are becoming more sophisticated day

by day. The ultra-modern film-music is throwing up a host of hybrid forms. The age of tradition is being usurped by an age of notation and music text-books. The giants of the past are being replaced by Radio music. The Gharanas are being usurped by schools. But, then what is the future of Indian music ? The book answers this question in some measure.

I was prompted to write this book to seek an answer for some of these vital problems. "Whither Indian music ?" was the question constantly in my mind. It is high time we give up the habit of glorifying an ancient art without appreciating its modern context. It is also futile to utter platitudes while heaping praises on the modern renaissance of Indian music. The main task is to solve some of its practical problems which have a direct bearing on its art and tradition. It is a plea for renaissance in its genuine sense and if I have succeeded in facing the problem squarely, I have half accomplished my task.

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S. K. CHAUBEY

## CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

# BACKGROUND

Art can only be visualized and judged in terms of its tradition. Divorced from its age-long tradition it only becomes a curiosity for fashionable curio-hunters and loses all its vital powers of expression. Indian music has an ancient history and a hoary tradition. From its earliest infancy up to the present time it has been an intimate part of our spiritual and emotional life, and has functioned vitally in building up our aesthetic self. While it is profitable to study its ancient history, it is much more profitable to review it up-to-date in its proper historical perspective. To glorify its past is only to pay it an oft-repeated tribute. But to examine its essentials is to evaluate it correctly. This is the only justice we can do it. To unearth it from the labyrinths of bygone centuries just to discover its ancient glory is only a matter of historical curiosity. In studying the dynamics of an art, changes have to be reckoned with. To imagine that our music is a kind of static, immovable species of art is to do it great injustice. It has

marched with time through a variety of vicissitudes. Historians of Indian music have blundered grievously whenever they have treated it as an Egyptian mummy shut up in a glass cage. A changing music has to be seen and judged against the background of economic, social, political and spiritual circumstances. No living music can ignore these vital conditions of life.

Starting its life as a form of ritual, as a crude expression-form it blossomed into a consummate art. Though born in the temple, it made its excursions into the world outside. Though the Indian classical mind suffered from a kind of metaphysical fixity, it always made new conquests and discovered new horizons for its spiritual expansion. Our music welcomed change though changes may not have been welcome. There is a terrible gap between ancient and modern music which injudicious historians have tried to fill up with fantastic theories. Look at the circumstances in which music flourished in the past. They are entirely different from our own modern conditions. A musician then was a man of high and sacred calling, performing his noble duty for the king and the court. He earned the patronage of kings and benefactors.

He lived in a society which was not baffled by questions pertaining to art and life, art and religion, art and social concepts, art and politics, music and war, music and peace, and art and art-forms. He was initiated into the art by some accomplished pundit or musician and learned to please only those who knew its mysteries. He was the first to realize that in this country music is a monopoly of the initiated few. He never had to cater to a mob of sensation-hunters. He acquired a distinguished place in royal courts and also among the intellectuals and scholars of society. Because of the special advantages of his noble calling, he never felt the great discomforts of economic struggle which the modern musician faces today. He lived under entirely different economic and social conditions and never had to face problems which confront the modern musician. In all that he did and achieved, he was ruled by tradition whose commands he obeyed cheerfully. This was his cardinal creed.

The modern musician, on the other hand, lives under different conditions. He lives as a back number in a society which has specialized in making social maladjustments and whose

economic problems are legion. Music is no more a noble calling but only a low profession. The musician of today is no more an accomplished courtier but only a "Professional" who provides entertainment to drawing-room lovers of music. People do not look upon him now as one who arouses noble emotions and moves and inspires deep passions but one who is a pleasing panderer by choice. What is the social status of a modern musician? He is a socially-ostracized individual who enjoys no economic benefits. He lives from hand to mouth. With the exception of a few musicians, majority of the musicians today, have not the means to sustain a bare economic existence. As individuals in society they mean nothing to us. They have no voice in the economic, social and political affairs of society. Unlike other prophets and leaders of society who manage to live by slogans and platitudes, they live and die unknown in a materialistic society which has no use for them.

Aristocracy, today, has fallen on evil days. It has not only become financially bankrupt but also spiritually bankrupt. Once upon a time, it was the custodian of good taste and good judgment. Now it is the sole patron of vulgarity—

vulgarity in life, taste and art. With few exceptions, Indian aristocrats patronize cheap and vulgar music in every form. They are no more the patrons of national art and national music. Many of the Indian princes are more familiar with races, golf, tennis, cricket, ball-room dancing, Holly-wood mannerisms, jazz (and private mistresses) than with the existence of Indian music and Indian musicians. Apart from these, they are patrons of all other fashionable vulgarities. (They are Philistines of the first order.)

The middle class has made a mess of music. Its interest in music is free-lance and academic though its enthusiasm for it is tremendous. It is the supreme patron of text-book music. The middle class man is so pre-occupied in his own problems and is so full of crass sophistication, bread-and-butter materialism, and vague ideologies, that he can love and support music only as a superfluous activity of his busy and un-adjusted life. He is always inclined to make compromises and effect bargains in his social and emotional life. His aesthetic sensibilities have a limited scope and while he timidly abstains from their pleasures he somehow imagines he is giving them a free outlet. He

treats all art with contemptuous compassion and patronizing sentimentality. That is why, his outlook on music, too, is often extremely perverted. While he is keen to do his best for music he does not possess the means to do so. He is only a fashionable aesthete who loves music as far as it satisfies his vagaries and needs. As a propagandist he can only preach Indian music without understanding its spirit and tradition.

The poorer classes in India have nothing to do with art and music. The severities of economic struggle leave them emotionally impoverished. Art and beauty have almost no place in their life. They lead a life of misery and want. Lives spent in such life-long drudgery cannot enjoy even, for a moment, the charms of music. The only song which can satisfy the hungry millions of this land is the song of freedom from want. Hunger gives them all their songs. These economically-starved individuals of a living Indian society have never known the name and meaning of our great music. To them it has meant a sealed mystery. To them it has, in other words, meant the monopoly of the richer classes. While there is power in the crude

varieties of their own music to move them to raptures, they have never had the privilege of knowing and enjoying the music of Hindusthan. Thus they can hardly patronize a music which they are not privileged to learn and enjoy. A Taj, a beautiful painting and a beatifical musical composition are all mysterious to these unprivileged "have-nots". They treat Indian music as a luxury of the rich.

It is easy to realize that the Indian musician today finds himself in new social circumstances. He is primarily a wage-earner. The prosperous society of the past which used to lavishly offer him benefactions, gifts, emoluments, wealth and high respect, has been succeeded, today, by a capitalistic society which offers him no economic security. No profession is so economically insecure as that of a musician. Other wage-earners work for a certain number of hours and get fixed wages. They are assured of an income. A musician has to feed and satisfy the artistic vagaries and varying tastes of music-lovers and even music-patrons. He can only earn his livelihood if he pleases his hearers. From lovers of the highest of classical music to patrons of the present-day cheap film music spiced with sex,

there is a mixed crowd of such music-minded individuals whom the average modern musician has to please. His economic security depends on the caprice of the middle-class mob whose limited mental equipment hardly permits it to dabble in art. On one hand, he devotes himself to traditional music and its intricacies, on the other, he has to earn his bread with unprofitable toil and drudgery. In his music he looks back to his glorious past, in everyday life he faces a dark disappointing future. Other wage-earners know toil as a means by which they earn their bread. An average musician, apart from earning his livelihood, has to toil ceaselessly to keep his music in full trim. He has to undergo a life-long apprenticeship. But this Spartan life never results in economic advantages and material benefits. One has heard idle theorizers talking glibly about Indian music and its wonderful effects. People often engage themselves in much vague discussion about Ragas, Raginis and their magical effects on human life. Such vague generalizations which are often supported by mythology, tradition and belief, do not take us far in arriving at any substantial conclusions. No one can deny that the Ragas and Raginis of Indian music have always been a great spiritualizing process and

have played a great part in building up the higher emotional life of the individual. The assumption cannot be refuted that Indian music is a miracle-worker whether the average Westerner believes it or not.

Beverly Nichols a misguided Westerner has deemed it fit to write silly and insulting remarks about Indian music in his much discussed book " The Verdict on India." A man who was privileged to enjoy the hospitality of decadent Indian courts and wealthy Philistines and reactionaries was naturally tempted to mistake the music of the nautch girls for the music of this land. The great Beethoven would have shuddered at this impudence. But Nichols the propagandist was interested in hurling abuse at our music dance, and art. Where the angels feared to tread the ignoramus did rush like a John Bull into the India crockery shop just for the fun of breaking a few window-panes. We refuse to tame him.

This trait of Indian music distinguishes it from all other systems of music in the world. It alone possesses power to arouse human emotions which correspond to the moods of nature. But to emphasize and repeat an oft-repeated point without judging it in the context of modern

life, is futile. The musician of the past had to appeal to simple human emotions. He could also devote himself to the pure undefiled pleasures of music. The musician of today has to address a new man who is made of several complexes. This new man is a Freudian in theory and a bungler in practice. Since he is made of curious psychological complexes, his mental and emotional life, today, is nourished under different psychological conditions. Like his motives, his emotions also are not simple and unmixed.

The average musician, today, has to inspire the sentiments and emotions of such men and women whose tastes are becoming fantastic everyday. He has to reject the pure technique of his art and replace it by a technique of superficial mannerisms. To the man of today, who is a bundle of compromises, he offers an improvised art full of many adjustments. He has yet to learn how to inspire the emotions of the modern man. As a result of these new social and psychological conditions a new hybrid music is born which is only enriched by a variety of mongrel styles. Never was Indian music obsessed with so many vulgarities as today. In order to adjust himself to a world of new conditions and new

tastes, the modern musician has to give up many time-honoured beliefs and creeds. In no sense, he is now the builder of taste and judgment. The music-loving public chooses its own patterns and varieties in music which he has to adopt and perfect in some form. The result is, he soon learns how to feed this hungry mob of musically-starved individuals.

He has to adjust himself to another great ideology and condition which is named as modern renaissance in Indian music. While others have gone mad about this renaissance and have wallowed in cheap platitudes and generalizations, to me, this whole movement seems to be without any roots. It is chiefly characterized by a total *absence of tradition* and a pervading spirit of *license*. The question is, where are the roots of this renaissance ? Most of the activities which are symbolic of this revival have no sustaining power. A music school and a text-book both, are completely divorced from the tradition and practice of music. The Radio and the film also are opposed to tradition in outlook. The musician today, is compelled to realize the implications of this artificial revival which is born out of the revolt of the modern propagandist soul.

It is an outburst of activity and nothing more. Uprooted from its soil, no renaissance can live long. There is always a danger of its lapsing into a mere revolt whose first function is to break all the old images of tradition. The modern revival of music is without a tradition. All its superficial exuberance is caused by a total denial of tradition in music.

A large number of our present-day musicians have thrown many cardinal principles of music overboard and have contrived to acquire much cheap popularity among the public. In matters of "Talim" apprenticeship, technique and conception of Ragas, musicians, today, are cut off from their original moorings, either compelled by the changes brought about in taste and appreciation or because of their insufficient training. Whatever the causes may be, an average popular musician, today, has no respect for old traditions of his music. The only exceptions are those chosen few who are still the torch-bearers of an ancient music. Ours is a generation of lost traditions and we must not be surprised if music is one of them.

The average educated music-lover hears good music as much as he relishes good food. He

does not bother himself about its ancient traditions; he is only concerned with its modern sensations. There is something in our present-day untraditional music which satisfies his ego-centric self and moves his restless soul. In fact, he is busy fashioning a music which responds to all his whims and expresses all his superficialities. The tragedy of the situation is heightened when we see that it is this pretentious snob who often pronounces judgments on Indian music from public platforms and public press.

In addition to the absence of tradition there is a spirit of license which governs our outlook on music. Mediocre rebels of music substitute license for liberty and bring about a state of lawlessness in music. Such a condition suits a host of our musicians who have had no *talim* and who are without a style. Many of our Khyal-singers would not exist if such conditions did not prevail. Take an important thing like style which every skilful musician must possess. How many among the new generation of musicians possess this indispensable virtue ? I can emphatically say that there are only a few who can fulfil the conditions which go to make a perfect style. With others, style is only mannerism.

Our conceptions of Ragas are derived from ancient treatises and also from the practical contributions of individual musicians of the past. Prompted by a spirit of license some modern musicians have lost this heritage too. In the matter of the interpretation of Ragas also, these musicians employ novel methods which are untraditional. In every respect the modern musician is ruled by a temperament which is nourished in an atmosphere of license and lawlessness.

Modern music has given birth to a curious caste-system, which consists of professionals and amateurs, the Brahmins and Harijans of music. And this has further produced a kind of class-consciousness and class-struggle of which both the groups are becoming more and more conscious. Such a situation never arose in the past. The professional musicians have always constituted a class. They were the Brahmins who had the monopoly of the fifth Veda of Sangita. They were the sole custodians of their art. But music, then, was pleasure as it is a marketable commodity now. Then it was a matter of sacred initiation ; now, it is a matter of vulgar competition. What was once a monopoly of the chosen and the initiated few is now fast becoming the

common possession of the promiscuous many. The professional musician of the present is different from the professional musician of the past because of his changed circumstances and changed outlook. For the first time he realizes that his music has a market. The Radio, the film, the gramophone and the *Mehfil* go to make this market. Like a clever craftsman he has to capture this market. Like a shop-keeper he has to sell his music in some form or other. The modern musician is, no doubt, rapidly realizing the meaning of demand and supply as the two important forces in this market. In supplying demands he creates more demands. I can point out some of our second-rate musicians who treat music as business and nothing more. Whatever their own merits may be they are prosperous in every sense and are unlike those who, in spite of starvation, treat music as a sacred art. This is surely a tragedy.

I do not think the amateur musician of today has yet proved a serious competitor to the professional artist. But he is definitely a serious problem with whom our music will have to deal in future. What are amateur musicians and what is their place in modern music ? It must

be clearly stated that for another half century those who call themselves amateurs, will have to depend upon those who are called professionals for training in music. In spite of music schools, the Guru or the Ustad, both, are indispensable to every serious and sincere student of music. Modern music institutions have made it a point to get rid of both. The result is text-book music. Amateurs must realize that in matters of training and equipment, they do not come up to the level of the professional Ustads. It would be advisable if they start with this primary assumption. In the whole of India there are only a few amateur musicians who have learned directly from well-known "Gayaks" and who have achieved some appreciable success. The majority of the remaining amateurs who belong to respectable, middle-class families, depend upon certified music teachers and tutors or badly-managed, under-staffed and half-starved music schools and institutions for their training in music. There are also some among this class who neither sit at the feet of the great musicians nor attend one hour classes in music schools, but learn music from third-rate music Ustads or Pundits who probably live on the bankrupt reputation of their ancestors. The whole training of the

amateurs is in a pell-mell. Someday something will have to be done to remedy this.

While amateur musicians may not be counted among the first-rate musicians of India, they have a bright future. What they require are both ***talim*** and talent. But without perseverance both of these are insufficient. Music as a vocation now, provides several avenues for earning one's livelihood. The professional musician who follows his old tradition and shuns innovations in style and technique, cannot easily adjust himself to new conditions. It is just possible, here he may be beaten by a third-rate tactful amateur musician who manages his business skilfully. Ever since music institutions have been started, amateur musicians earn by way of music tuitions a bigger sum than the poor limited income of an average professional. The amateur can exploit other avenues also which a professional musician cannot exploit. Intrinsically the professional musician has great merits and enjoys a higher respect in the world of music but the amateur musician scores over him in matters of reputation and middle class respectability. In modern educated homes and music schools it is mostly the amateur and not the

*professional who teaches music to children* and adults of both the sexes. While in music the average amateur suffers from a sense of inferiority complex, in matters of respectability and social status he puts on supercilious airs which befit his meagre education. It is not far from truth to say that in years to come in view of the wide-spread propaganda of music among the educated classes, the amateur musician will become a potent factor in the new profession of music, and the professional will have to fight against him to sustain his economic life. The amateur of today will become the professional of tomorrow and music as a profession will suffer from no social taboos. But the present competitive consciousness will persist and will become more acute as time passes.

Two things we must remember in this connection. The first is, that classical music, today, is on trial and the tribunal consists of competent and incompetent judges. The second is that while in the lives of many musicians devoted to genuine classical music, the only rewards often have been suffering and starvation, many of our pinchbeck celebrities, whose sole training has been in third-rate counterfeit music, have

received fame, publicity and wealth at the hands of the public. The greatest force against which classical music has to fight today is the ever-multiplying variety of a hybrid and so-called light music. Light music conveys vague ideas and it may be light but it is hardly music. Varieties like Thumri, Dadra, Bhajan and even Ghazal are artistic in text, meaning and rendering. They are definitely Indian varieties. But the other hybrid varieties, which have sprung up besides these, have nothing to do with the genius of our music. The present-day film music provides a series of such mongrel products which are multiplying every day. Such a cheap sentimental music carries us nowhere. But it is this music which is receiving a tremendous ovation in our homes, schools and public halls. Like the American jazz it has caught our youthful generation in its grip. Time will show whether it will live and grow as a permanent phase of our new life. But one thing is clear. This music is becoming tremendously popular with large numbers of people. In many quarters it has scored over classical music. And even some of those who support classical music vociferously are carried off their feet by this

music when it is sung or played. The classical musician of today has to compete against this handsome monster of the capitalist.

What is called as public opinion in Indian music is more public than opinion. The musician of today is often a victim of its capricious dictates. In India, Indian music and Indian musicians cannot depend upon this erring public conscience. In fact, in all countries, public opinion is the last thing which shapes genuine art. Artists and musicians often fall a prey to its snares and sacrifice the merits of their art. In our country public opinion in music is often a form of aggression which forces musicians to prostitute their art. A public which does not inspire musicians to give their best can hardly claim to be their sole judge. Public opinion is doing a great disservice to Indian music and it would be right to say that as long as it dictates terms to musicians, it would prove positively detrimental to the growth of music. It may be possible one day to have responsible public opinion on music and musicians in India. But the day is still far-off. In the meantime our musicians who are victimized by it every day, must learn to fight against it in their own way.

CHAPTER II

# WHAT IS HINDUSTHANI CLASSICAL MUSIC ?

The term "Indian Classical music" ought to embrace both the classical music of the South, called Karnatak music, and the classical music of the North called Hindusthani classical music. Karnatak music which is a great system of music is confined to a limited area in Southern India and its influence has not penetrated into other parts of India. On the other hand, Hindusthani classical music, originally the music of the North, is now universally recognized all over India. Therefore, for the sake of convenience, in this book, the terms Indian classical music and Hindusthani classical music, are identically the same in meaning.

Instead of conducting a technical discussion of classical music and its grammar it is far better to understand the true spirit of its art. How to answer the layman who repeatedly asks "What is classical music"? Classical music is both classical and music and is Indian in spirit.

It is as ancient as the Vedas. It is just possible, the music of Samveda was the music of the Vedic period and post-Vedic period in India. But no historian can trace the origins and beginnings of an ancient art with any mathematical precision. The history of Indian classical music, therefore, must have the inevitable gaps.

We derive from Shastras or ancient treatises all our knowledge of classical music. Among the most outstanding ones are :—Natya Shastra, Narad Shiksha, Sangit-Ratnakar, Raga-Tarangini, Sangit-Darpan, Sangit-Parijata, Nagmat-e-Asaphi, Sangit Ragakalpadruma, Sangit Paddhati and others.

The theory of classical music, divorced from practical art, has no meaning. It is a product of ages. While it has established laws which cannot be easily violated, it has been tremendously influenced by musicians.

That is why, tradition in classical music is a very important thing.

Since times immemorial, Indian music has depended upon a scientific system which has been both rigid and elastic.

There is no such thing as Hindu classical music or Muslim classical music. For centuries, Hindus and Muslims have united their efforts in enriching one and the same system of music.

While there have been no divergent schools of thought among musicians in Indian music, there have been musicians and groups or families of musicians following different styles but inspired and guided by ideals of fundamental unity.

The "Gharanas" or the families have invariably been the nucleus of practical art.

But Indian music being highly individualistic, individual musicians have played a very great part in stimulating the progress of music. In fact, in India all great musicians embody and interpret the music of their age and time. They build up epochs in art.

No system of classical music belongs to the masses, though it appeals to them. This holds true in the case of Indian classical music too.

This music has a genius and a character of its own which distinguish it from all other systems of music.

In our country, music like literature, has interpreted life in a vital manner.

Therefore, any study of Indian culture which omits music, is incomplete.

If one wants to form a correct estimate of classical music, he must see it in its spiritual and sensuous forms because they are inseparable. Passion and philosophy, both are interwoven in its texture.

Like every other art it has evolved a grammar of technique, an art of interpretation. The two are not opposed to each other, but, in fact, complete each other. No one should run the risk of misjudging classical music by trying to evaluate them separately.

Therefore, though grammarians and musicians have existed separately, what is called classical music has been built up by the united efforts of both. Man and nature are inseparably united in this music. Both are beings whose varying moods have a great resemblance. Classical music was never written and recorded. It was heard, acquired and transmitted.

Therefore, modern classical music, unlike ancient classical music, has to be reviewed afresh, in a new historical perspective.

These are some of those vital truths and assumptions which form the basis of Indian

classical music. They are axioms which we must admit.

But the anxious enquirer may again impatiently interrogate "What goes to make your music ? " We might give him a brief account.

The whole classical music is conceived in terms of Ragas and ·Raginis which constitute its backbone. Each Raga is a combination of "Swaras" or notes and possesses a distinct individuality. The seven Shuddha (natural) Swaras and the five Vikrit ones go to make twelve notes which, in fact, are derived from the basic twenty-two "Shrutis" of our music without which the registering of the three Saptakas (Octaves) Mandra, Madhya and Tar would not have been possible. All Ragas emerge form a Saptaka and are divided into three main categories Sampuran (Ragas having all the seven notes), Shadava (Ragas having six notes), and Oudava (Ragas having five notes). According to modern classical music, all Ragas can be classified under ten Thathas or basic scales like Iman, Bilawal, Khamaj, Bhairon, Purvi, Marwa, Kafi, Asawari, Bhairavi and Todi. From these have been derived hundreds of Ragas and their mixed varieties.

The four important notes in a Raga are Vadi *(king)*, *Samvadi (prime minister)*, *Vevadi* (the enemy) and Anuvadi (friend). The correct recording of these is very helpful in giving the correct picture of a Raga. Apart from these, six others may be mentioned which enrich the Raga. These are Graha, Ansha, Nyasa, Apanyasa, Sanyasa and Vinyasa.

But apart from the ten Thathas of modern music, the three Gramas, Kharaj, Madhyam and Gandhar must be mentioned, which in the past were registered and established among the twenty-two Shrutis and each of which possessed seven Murchhanas (the seven ascending and descending notes in order).

According to the ancient conception of music, the original six Ragas were Bhairav, Shri, Malkaus, Dipak, Megh and Hindol. The first three are sung in the morning, evening (or after-noon) and night respectively. These are the hours when music is mostly sung or played. The remaining three are seasonal varieties. Dipak is sung in summer; Megh is sung in the rainy season; and Hindol is sung in winter. Out of these Ragas Dipak is not now in vogue and probably became obsolete after the age of Tansen.

However it must be mentioned that the classification of Ragas according to these six original Ragas and thirty-six Raginis is now out of date. Equally unnecessary it is to establish the four ancient categories, Raga, Raga-Patni, Raga-putra, and Raga-putra-vadhu. The classification is based on the sex and family of the Ragas and is only a kind of genealogical tree. This, however, is out of date now.

Ragas can be divided into two groups, Purvarag and Uttarrag. The Sandhiprakash Ragas (twilight Ragas) are those which are sung either at sunrise or sunset.

While ten basic and workable Thathas are universally recognised, seventy-two such scales are possible. According to the simple law of permutation and combination thirty-four thousand eight hundred forty-eight Ragas are possible. But this is more or less a mathematical speculation and has no bearing on the actual practice of music.

What are therefore Ragas and Raginis? While some Ragas have a male character and some have feminine tenderness, it is almost preposterous to set up but different categories of

male Ragas and female Ragas. A Raga is a combination of notes with a distinct personality of its own, arousing human emotions to which its own emotional mood corresponds. The reason why Ragas are sung or played at an appointed hour is because there is a great deal of resemblance between the moods of nature and the moods of man. This time-theory of Ragas puzzles the layman as much as it baffles those who are not acquainted with Indian classical music. It must be emphatically asserted that the theory is scientific and we cannot disprove it even with the help of our most revolutionary experiments and innovations in music today.

Each Raga is a text which provides a scope for the interpretation of emotions which vary according to hours. Great musicians are those who not only paint a Raga but interpret emotions also with an equal grace. Both imagination and artistic skill are required to achieve this end. And the greatest virtue of a Raga is that it makes such an interpretation possible. I consider this to be the highest asset of our music, and it is my solemn contention that the · sic of the West provides no such parallel. What the words are to language, *swaras* are to music.

But while the former are a visible, and concrete support, the latter are only a subtle and intangible means. Imagine the stuff these Ragas are made of. No wonder if they arouse and interpret emotions which are so indispensable to aesthetic life. The question has often been asked whether words are indispensable to music. In its essence, in its spiritual content, Indian classical music can retain its individuality and appeal without words. But words are necessary to convey the meaning of Raga to us. Language simplifies and portrays emotions as nothing else does. In music we legitimately seek a tangible, communicative means which is language. There, words give us ideas made of flesh and blood.

Almost all the compositions of classical music have been composed and sung in Braj Bhasha which has proved to be its most appropriate and natural vehicle especially for the last two or three centuries. It is amazing that for such a long period Braj Bhasha has such a tremendous hold on classical music. Even now there is no other Indian language which can take its place in Hindusthani classical music. It has learned to cultivate a wonderful adaptability suiting the compositions of classical Ragas. The history of

these compositions is, in many ways, the history of Hindusthani classical music. Let us examine some of them.

*Dhrupad* :—This was popular in India almost for 'three or four centuries. In the time of Akbar, Tansen was an outstanding Dhrupadist and he also followed an old tradition. He learned it from Haridas Swami Dagur of Brindaban. Besides Tansen, other Dhrupadists of the bygone time were Nayak Gopal, Nayak Baiju, Chintamani Mishra and others who are now obscure. Among the descendants of Tansen's family, only a few present-day obscure musicians can be mentioned.

With the lapse of time, Dhrupad was ousted by Khyal. Today, there are almost no good Dhrupadists left. As a composition it provides a greater scope in its text than the Khyal does. Its four integral parts are Sthai, Antara, Sanchari and Abhog. In some of the modern Dhrupads only the first two are considered necessary, Sanchari and Abhog being conspicuous by their absence. But the old orthodox Dhrupads had all the four parts. Very few of the older Dhrupads were composed in Sanskrit. The majority

of these compositions have been composed in Hindi, Brajbhasha or Hindi-ized Urdu.

The well-known work "Sangit-Kalpadrum" gives hundreds of old Dhrupad compositions which might have been saved and preserved to some extent if a scientific system of notation had existed then. Musicians who knew some of these compositions are now no more.

The four recognized styles of Dhrupad are Khandar, Nohar, Dagur and Gobarhare. It is however difficult to hear these representative types sung now. They are gradually dying out. In ancient music also there existed such styles as Shuddha Bhinna, Vesra, Gaudi and Sadharani. One requires a rich male voice for singing this composition. The chief Rasa-types or emotions which characterize it are Vira, Shringar and Shanta, i.e., heroic, amorous and serene. The Talas or time-measures which are mostly used in these compositions are Chautala, Sulfok, Jhampa, Tivra, Brahma, Rudra, etc.

It has a technique of its own, entirely different from the technique of Khyal. It deliberately omits the Tana and specializes in Dugun,

Chogun, Boltana, Gamak, etc. Its correct rendering from the point of view of Raga and technique, both, is essential. There is a classical restraint and dignity about it and, that is why, it has a character of its own. Its discipline and grace seem to be quite unlike the profuse decoration and flourishes of Khyal.

The language of Dhrupad—composition is more chaste and imaginative than the language of Khyals. For a Dhrupadist voice-culture is most essential because without this words can never be sung with any artistic effect.

Every musician cannot become a Dhrupadist though he may acquire a knowledge of its fundamentals. In fact, much depends on the temperament of the musician. One who wishes to sing it as it should be sung should remember that in Dhrupad highest simplicity means highest beauty.

It has almost died out. Even with musicians it has become sufficiently obsolete. Probably, its glory will never return. It ill suits an age like ours in which music is a matter of new fads and fashions. The spirit of modern music is opposed to the spirit of Dhrupad. There

is something in our disposition today which is opposed to it. But the fact remains that no one can understand and appreciate the genius of our music without knowing what Dhrupad is. While talking about Dhrupad, a word must be said about the significance of Alap. It was customary for the Dhrupadists of the past to do the Alap (Nom Tom) of a Raga and then sing its *Dhrupad*. The technique of Alap enables the musician to give the graphic analysis of a Raga in four parts, Sthai, Antara, Sanchari and Abhog. When the atmosphere of the Raga is conjured up, a Dhrupad sung in it makes a ready appeal to the listeners. The technique of Alap is now becoming extinct. In fact, it is so difficult to acquire it that people develop an aversion for it. With the exception of Ustad Fayaz Khan who is a master of this technique and the descendants of Bairam Khan who have learned it as a part of their Gharana style, there are very few musicians in India today who sing it with any perfection.

*Hori and Dhamar*. They are akin to Dhrupad in spirit. The Tala used in such compositions is Dhamar and special emphasis is laid

on Dugun, Chogun, Boltana, Gamak and other embellishments of time-measure. Though the themes of these compositions vary, some of the best are those which are connected with the festival of Holi in which the romance of Krishna and Radha is described most vividly. But these are also becoming out of vogue.

*Sadra.* It is more recent in origin. Its compositions are set to Jhaptal. The late Nazir Khan of Moradabad was an expert Sadra-singer. But much greater was the famous Dulhe Khan of Lucknow who was a very renowned Sadra-singer some forty years ago. In a Sadra the intricacies of time-measure are artistically combined with the clever rendering of the Raga.

*Khyal.* The stately Dhrupad which was fettered by its self-imposed rules of discipline could not endure any longer amid great changes which were brought about by the cross-fertilization of Hindu and Muslim cultures. The classical ancient Dhrupad was the music of the classical Indian. For centuries it expressed the genius of our music. With the advent of Muslim culture and its consequent impact on Hindu thought, important changes and adjust-

ments were brought about. The tremendous influence of Persian literature and music on our music cannot be minimised. New compositions like Khyal were a product of this intermingling of cultures. Many amazing results appeared. The Muslims began to write in Hindi and from sixteenth century onwards, Hindi poetry can legitimately boast of poets like Amir Khusru, Jayasi, Kutban, Manjhan, Rahim, Shekh, and Alam who wrote poetry of enduring worth. In the realm of music also names like Amir Khusru, Husan Shah Sharqi, Mohammad Shah Rangile are among those which are memorable.

Ultimately, the classical Dhrupad was succeeded by the romantic Khyal. The Brahmin was ousted by the rebel. The place of discipline and restraint was usurped by a rich imagination. In fact "Emotions recollected in tranquillity" were substituted by emotions of immediate appeal. Dignity yielded place to decoration. The venerable Dhrupad was dethroned and in its place the respectable Khyal was made king to rule the kingdom of classical music.

The literal meaning of the word "Khyal" is imagination which symbolizes its spirit also. It

was in the time of Sultan Husain Sharqi that the Khyal came into limelight. In the court of the Moghul emperor Mohammad Shah there were two musicians, Adarang and Sadarang who composed hundreds of Khyal-songs which are still sung. These are first-rate compositions in Khyal which have not been surpassed as yet. These two musicians taught the Khyal-style to hundreds of their pupils but they neither sang it themselves nor encouraged their kith and kin or descendants to do the same. As composers they have been famous for the last two or three centuries as the chief precursors of Khyal-style. Among the great Khyalists of the past, musicians like Haddu Khan, Hassu Khan, Nathu Khan and the great Nathan Pir Buksh were linked with Adarang and Sadarang in many ways.

The Kawwal variety of Khyal was invented by Amir Khusru and came into vogue very soon. The Dhrupad variety of Khyal is now quite rare. The slow and fast styles of Khyal are the two recognized types today. The Talas used are mostly Dhima, Tilwara, Ektal, Jhumra and Adachautal. The actual rendering of this style depends upon artistic flourishes and embellishments like Tan, Boltan, Gamak, chaste and

artistic pronunciation and correct recording of notes. The modern Khyal is a gift of the Muslims. Some of the greatest Khyal-singers in the last two centuries have been Muslims who have exerted a tremendous influence on the modern styles of Khyal. The present Hindusthani classical music is mostly the music of "Khyal Gayaki," and history bears it out that Muslims have made the largest contribution to its advancement and popularity. In matters of technique and style, Muslim Musicians have done great pioneer work. This fact cannot be denied by us. There was something in the Muslim temperament which kept on fashioning and re-fashioning the literature and fine arts of this country. The Muslim mind was both liberal and vigorous It influenced our thought powerfully. It has influenced our music also, and has enriched especially the Khyal-style with imagination, vigour, beauty and appeal.

*Tappa.* It is a distinct style which is different from the Dhrupad and the Khyal in many respects. It is inferior to Khyal though like the Khyal its compositions have two indispensable parts Sthai and Antara. The talas are almost the same, though the technique of Tappas

is entirely based upon a series of smart Tan-combinations which have a charm of their own. Most of the Tappa-songs are sung in Ragas like Kafi, Jhinjhoti, Pilu, Barwa, Mand, Bhairavi, Khamaj, etc. Its spirit is Shringar.

It is traced back to the time of Shori Mian. Punjab seems to be its home and often many of its compositions are sung in Punjabi.

Its style is dying out. Only here and there one comes across musicians who know how to render it correctly.

*Tarana.* The names of musicians like Bahadur Husain Khan, Tanras Khan and others are linked up with the recent history of this composition. Words do not count in it. The only words used in it are for example, na, ta, re, dani, odani, tanam, Yalali, Yalum, tadaredani and the like. The Tarana-singer must have a perfect command over Tala and its intricacies. Composers have introduced in it the language of Pakhawaj and even Persian words or couplets. Almost all the Khyalists sing it for the sake of variety and change. At the present time, the fast Taranas are very popular. While they can be set to any current Tala, speed is not the only

virtue of their compositions. And similarly, though they are a popular variety of classical music, they can only be rendered correctly and artistically by a clever Khyalist.

*Composers and Compositions.* Students of literature are often amazed at the poetic beauty of many of these songs. Some self-centred scholars and poets of modern Hindi literature treat the poetry of these compositions with a mixed feeling of amusement and derision. They imagine that musicians have no right to become poets, and further explain that the latter are the sole custodians of all poetic genius. The result is that they are unaware of the wealth of poetry which lies hidden in hundreds of such songs. Take some illustration of the poetry of our Hindusthani classical music. Many of these compositions have been enriched by Sanskrit, Hindi, Braj Bhasha and Urdu. Hindu and Muslim musicians, both, have sung them for generations without any linguistic differences. Here is a proof of the fundamental unity of our music and its unbroken tradition. These are either original compositions or adaptations from poets. The Hindi-Urdu controversy does not apply to the language of our music. What

Surdas, Mira and Amir Khusru have written cannot be replaced by Nirala, Prasad and Pant. The highly-Sanskritized verse and the highly-Persianized poetry of today are no substitute for the beautiful and moving poetry of the past. The Khari Boli of today cannot take the place of Braj Bhasha or simple Hindi found in thousands of our music compositions. Our modern poets may have enriched the literature of modern Geets, Bhajans and even Ghazals, but they have written almost nothing to suit the genius of Hindusthani classical music. It would be wrong for them to change the character of this ancient music to suit their verse. It would also be unfair on their part to accuse Indian classical music of being classical, hybrid and out-of-date and to take shelter behind the platitudes and slogans of ultra-modernism in art and music. That is the refuge of an intellectual coward. The West too, has never tried to replace its Beethoven and Bach by jazz and Rumba. The worshippers of modern Hindi and modern Urdu must realize the importance of Braj Bhasha and simple Hindi for Indian music. And if they don't, let them write and compose something equally good. Let this be an impetus to those who are alive to the situation.

## CHAPTER III

# POPULAR MUSIC

The other day, someone facetiously remarked that popular music is popular but not music. I am in agreement with the pointedness of the remark but not with what it implies. In recent times, the term "Popular Music" has acquired such a current usage that now it is difficult to define it accurately. While its meaning is vague, its associations are vaguer still. People have defined it in several ways but in their minds they have not been clear about its meaning. One thing, however, is very clear which we must note. Within the last two or three decades, popular music has come into the forefront and has acquired a reputation which it did not possess before. It has come to stay and it would be futile to deny its existence and power.

Every classical music must have its popular varieties. In all arts, classical restraint, decorum and dignity are followed by an outburst of popular imagination. Classical severities are always liberalized to some extent. The popular

varieties of our music are intimately associated with classical music. They grow and flourish in proportion to the general spread of music among the people. As music grows and advances popular imagination shapes it more and more. Classical and popular varieties grow side by side. One is not necessarily opposed to the other. It must never be assumed that popular music fundamentally indicates a spirit of revolt against classical music Both are kindred spirits though their means and ends in modern times may be different. Popular music is essentially the music of the people in general and *is surely an expression of their flesh-and-*blood humanity.

In order to answer the question "What is popular music?" it is necessary to know its chief expression-forms. We ought to know something about the types of composition which are popular and music both. A study of these is indispensable to the study of modern Indian music.

*Thumri.* One has always heard orthodox votaries of classical music thundering at Thumri with righteous indignation. They seem to imagine that it is a bastard child of classical

music and that it only deserves to be disowned, disinherited and discarded. There are some who treat it as an untouchable in public but pay court to it in private. Such people are victims of blind, meaningless orthodoxy in music. The musician who tried to create a sensation in a certain Indian Durbar by refusing to sing Thumri because it was generally sung by non-Brahmin professional dancing girls, was taken unawares when he was challenged if he could sing it at all.

In fact, the Thumri is a pretty composition with an artistic design. While it enjoys greater latitude than Khyal in matters pertaining to pure, orthodox conception of Ragas, technique and rendering, its art is most difficult to learn. A musician who is a good Khyalist, can enrich Thumri with imagination and many new artistic flourishes if he so desires. But this does not pre-suppose his command over the style of Thumri. Many of our well-known Khyalists, today, cannot render a Thumri artistically.

We must remember that unlike Khyal, Thumri is not generally taught except among the average professional prostitutes who are only

prompted by their desperate professional needs to do so. It is a matter of observation that Thumri taught in this way is a dull affair. The fact is, that the style of Thumri is acquired through experience and imaginative assimilation. India's best Thumri-singers in the past have been those who never learned it from an Ustad. Mozzuddin and Malka did not attend any regular class in Thumri. Their temperaments and imaginative minds adopted its style as a great artistic means. Their unfettered genius helped them to learn it with perfection.

What counts in Thumri is imaginative temperament. Unlike the Dhrupadist and the Khyalist, who give the first place to Talim and not to temperament, the Thumri-singer reverses the order and cultivates a suitable temperament for rendering it. In singing Thumri, one has to dispense with things like a classical rendering of Asthai and Antara, Gamak, Soot, intricate Tans, correct and detailed analysis and exposition of the Raga, and a technique or style, too severe for its text and meaning. One must have a sweet, flexible voice to do so. The soul of Thumri is "Bol" the rendering of which is a gift of temperament

not possessed by many. While the Khyal is like classical painting done on a wide canvas, the Thumri is like miniature painting with all its rich artistic details.

Thumri was born in the United Provinces where its main features developed. Lucknow was its mother and Benares its sweetheart. From these cities the Thumri has travelled far and wide in the country. Musicians all over India look upon these two cities as originators of its technique and also responsible for cultivating the two main styles called the Lucknow style and the Benares style. The Lucknow style of Thumri, which was originally invented by the famous musician Sadiq Ali Khan, reached its consummation in the superb style of the late Mozzuddin Khan who has been rightly called the greatest Thumri-singer of recent times. He exerted a tremendous influence on the Thumri-singers of Benares. Having learned this style in Lucknow, he enriched it with his genius which was admirably suited to this style. While we mention his name in this connection we must not forget the name of his Guru the famous Bhaiya Saheb Ganpat Rao who was called Bhaiyaji, all over India. He was

a member of the royal family of Gwalior and for the sake of music he gave up all his rights and wandered like a pilgrim of music all over India staying at places like Rampur, Lucknow, Gaya and Calcutta. He was called a prince among Harmonium players. It is he who initiated the great Mozzuddin into the mysteries of the Thumri style.

The Lucknow style of Thumri is chaste, artistic and full of luxurious details. It evolved an orthodox pattern and a conventional style, both of which provided sufficient scope for the expression of emotions. The famous Thumri composer of Lucknow Qadar Pia composed dozens of compositions suiting this style which are still sung in Lucknow. The language of the Lucknow Thumris has been uniformly the same. On the other hand, the Benares Thumri has been tremendously influenced by the local dialects. On this style the influence of varieties of folk music like Kajri and Chaita also has been very great which is evident from the actual rendering of the Benares Thumri. But it owes its origin to the Lucknow Thumri in every respect. The Punjabi style of Thumri which is becoming somewhat popular in the U. P. also

has been influenced by its folk music, like Pahari, Mahiya etc. It is mainly characterized by the absence of the technique of "Bol" which as I have said is the soul of a Thumri. As a style it cannot compete with the Lucknow and the Benares styles.

The Thumri will live whether the Khyal lives or not. It has a future. Musicians like Bhaiya-ji, Mozzuddin, Malka and others and composers like Lalan Pia, Sanad Pia, Qadar Pia, and a host of others have left a rich legacy behind to which the musicians and composers of today will have to add their own enriching contribution.

*Ghazal.* The ghazal as a literary product of the nineteenth century was a flowering of the genius of Urdu poetry. On it was exerted the influence of Muslim culture and Muslim temperament. As a literary form now it enjoys an unprecedented prestige. Poets of all species of temperaments look upon it as a touchstone of excellent poetry. It began to be rendered by musicians in the latter half of the nineteenth century and was soon adapted as a distinct popular style especially by the Kaw-wals and dancing-girls. It is now universally sung and played by all kinds of musicians. From

a film-star to a classical musician every musician treats it as a respectable breed. All bans have been lifted and all taboos have been destroyed. The result is that the Ghazal, today, is a respectable variety of music.

Ghazals can be rendered only in popular Ragas like Bhairvi, Pilu, Bhimpalasi, Des, Khamaj and others. While Ghazals rendered in Ragas like Shri, Todi and Marva would be absurd, successful attempts have been made to sing them in Ragas like Bageshri, Malkaus, Shankara and Darbari.

The orthodox conventional style of Ghazal lays especial emphasis on correct pronunciation, correct accent, a good voice, emotional appeal and interpretation of poetry through the skilful combination of notes and other necessary artistic details. The technique of Bol through pronunciation is also employed in it but the scope is limited and much discretion has to be used in doing that. The Tans have no place in Ghazals and spoil their beauty. Only a musician with correct Urdu pronunciation can sing it. It would be absurd to ask a Bengali or a Maharashtra to sing a Ghazal. Any attempts by them

in this direction would remind us of the failures of Dilip Kumar Roy and Pankaj Mullick.

If there is any class in India which has specialized in its technique and has perfected it to some extent, it is the so-called professional Bais. Few can beat them in this art. The names of Malka, Zohra and Gohur still ring in our ears. The Kawwals also have exerted an enriching influence on its technique but at the present time, they occupy a secondary position. An average Kawwal does not possess those niceties and flourishes of voice which a Bai has. This is probably a result of his professional technique of singing which is definitely harmful to his voice-culture.

The Radio and the film have also given it a great impetus. The former has created a class of listeners who are Ghazal-minded almost to the exclusion of everything else. It must be borne in mind that Muslims are the chief patrons of Ghazal as music and they have a large share in its present progress and development. Apart from the Radio and the Film, the general public also has made it its hot favourite. From the grocer to the undergraduate there is a wide range of its lovers and admirers.

Innovators are busy setting Ghazals to new music everyday. What is called as the Punjabi style of rendering a Ghazal is coming into vogue and is changing the old style and technique of Ghazal very fast. The orthodox conventional style of Ghazal which had reigned in the past two or three decades, is becoming out-of-date and obsolete. The film companies are busy in inventing a new style of Ghazal which is a kind of ultra-modern cross-breed. It is something like a silly, sentimental Geet dressed in decent Urdu. It resembles neither the orthodox nor the unorthodox Ghazal. Boys of twenty in their loose pyjamas and girls of teens in their silken kimonas hum this variety in their dressing-rooms, bath-rooms, drawing-rooms and even class-rooms. It is par excellence the sob-stuff of our modern music.

The Ghazal will live and live with a vengeance. Modern classical music will have to own it one day as its wayward child. This prodigal son, this moody truant may return to the classical fold and be reformed. But even if this does not happen, classical music cannot disown and disinherit it in any way. I wish our modern musicians would give up touching

the Ghazal with a pair of tongs. Let them own it and shape it in their own way. This will be their contribution to its development.

*Dadra.* The style of Dadra is very much akin to the style of Thumri. Both are kindred spirits. Structurally, they are not different from each other. Technically speaking, they enjoy the status though the Thumri seems to have a higher position. But they differ in their Talas. The tempo is faster in Dadra than in Thumri. In their evolution the Dadra must have preceded the Thumri because the Talas used in Dadra are older and more primitive than the ones used in Thumri. However, this is only a surmise. In their structure, theme, language, sentiment, treatment and exposition they are the same. Like the Thumri styles, the Dadra styles also developed in the neighbourhood of Lucknow and Benares. Both these styles of Dadra exist today with almost the same differences as are found in the Thumri styles. At present the Benares style of Dadra seems to be very popular with people. One cannot but mention the name of late Mozzuddin Khan again in this connection. Just as he was the master of the Thumri style he was also the master of the Dadra style. Here also

he exerted a great influence on contemporary musicians of his time. People still imitate his style with much profit.

At the present time, the prostitutes and dancing girls are the masters of this art. They are conversant with all its styles ranging from the Dadra sung by women in homes to Dadra as a finished product and a sophisticated species of art. Some of them can sing it with inimitable grace.

The Dadra can be slow and fast both. But whatever its "lai" may be, it is most difficult to sing it. Just as in Thumri, in Dadra too, the musician has to learn many virtues and unlearn many vices of his art. Classical music cannot afford to deride it any more. Since it originally belongs to the countryside, to the rural background of our life, it will always live in some form and some shape. It will be advisable for many classical musicians to experiment with it and shape it anew on the lines of its tradition.

*Kawwali.* This is, primarily, religious in content and appeal. Its style and technique have been developed mainly by the Kawwals who have made it a thing of tremendous religious

appeal. Because of its typical Mohammedan religious associations, as a variety of popular music, it has a limited scope of appeal. It caters for special Muslim religious sections in the country among whom all other varieties of music are banned.

The best Kawwali is heard in places of Mohammedan pilgrimage where there are religious tombs. The Kawwali was born at the Mazar and will die there. Only occasionally, it makes excursions into homes and public places. During the religious fair held annually at Ajmer, some of the best Kawwals of India gather and exhibit their art by moving large masses of Muslims to mystical and pseudo-mystical raptures and ecstasies.

There is a curious combination of secular and spiritual ideas in the religious themes of these Kawwalis and the listener's mind automatically travels from "Majaz to Haqiqat" from the physical to the transcendental. Most of these are pretty compositions with ready appeal and charm with the accompaniment of a Dholak and Harmonium a group of Kawwals sing together producing such an emotional atmosphere that

coins and currency notes are thrown before them by the devotee-admirers. Only a cynic can resist the effect of such an appeal.

Among varieties of religious music which are popular among the general masses of people in India, the Kawwali is a vigorous and virile type and will last as long as Islam lasts. It is a special contribution of Muslims to our music because apart from being religious it is popular too. It may not have to do much with the genius of our music, but it is a product of Muslim culture.

*Kirtan and Bhajan.* India is, essentially, a religious country. Since times immemorial spiritual passions have inspired the greatest activities of this land. Religion pervaded every aspect of life. Even now religious motives come into lime-light at every social and political crisis. Our fine arts also were greatly influenced by religious motives and passions. From the study of architecture one can see the mighty influence of religion and religious ideas exerted through centuries on this art. In the past the greatest master-pieces of Indian architecture have been either temples or buildings or designs having

some religious associations of history. Some of the most beautiful temples of the south and the north illustrate this point even to this day. The Hindu art is an art of the temple and the monument. Similarly, the Buddhist art is also essentially religious in content though like Hindu art it does not preclude secular notions. Examples of this art are found all over the country. Even the great Moghul art which was secular in essence reached its consummation in the superb Taj which is the most beautiful tomb of the world, the tomb of exquisite marble in which human love and human memory find eternal shelter.

The historical background of our music is essentially religious. For centuries it was religious in character though it was becoming secular in many aspects as society developed and civilization advanced. The Muslims were the first to convert it into a great secular art. But even now Indian music as a secular art is not without its deep spiritual background. Like the devotee of the past, the devotee of the present is a singer. In our country worship and music have always gone hand in hand. As a finished product of human genius, as a living secular music, classical music has travelled on its chosen

path. But this has not meant the death of religious music which exists in many shapes and forms. The Kirtan as a form of religious music is found all over India. The Kirtan-singers form a distinct class of musicians whose vocation is regarded sacred. Kirtan is worship through music. But this music is not necessarily classical, though it is simple and moving and has a tremendous mass-appeal. There is not a place in India where it is not sung. It does not only move the devotees and the religious-minded people; it moves and inspires large masses of average men and women whose secular preoccupations are many. The Bhakti cult movement which acquired a special mass-appeal and moved the religious emotions of people in places like South India, U. P., and Bengal, gave birth to Kirtan and other similar forms. Ramanuj, Chaitanya and Vallabhacharya supplied it the first and also the greatest spiritual impetus and under the guidance of their sects, it grew and developed. The Vaishnava cult nursed it like its own child.

Kirtan has many other crude varieties which are found among various sects living in towns and villages. The Katha is another variety which has a universal appeal. In every corner

of India where the Hindus live, the Katha is enjoyed by thousands of simple and unsophisticated people with rapt attention. These religious stories narrated with the help of music have a great appeal for thousands of people in India.

The name of Mira is intimately associated with Kirtan and Bhajans. Many of her songs which were sung by her in full mystical ecstasy have come down to us through generations of singers and musicians. Even classical musicians have adapted her songs to their music. They have poetry and music both. They are still sung all over India. As Bhajans they have not been surpassed by anything written in Indian literature and supply excellent models. But in talking about Bhajans one must mention the names of Tulsidas and Surdas, the two greatest poets of Hindi literature. Each of them is a monument, a supreme literary event, nay, a living epoch in Indian literature. The Ramayan of Tulsi is the Bible of India and provides dozens of excellent verses which have been sung by thousands of people as Bhajans. Surdas has also given us hundreds of immortal verses which make excellent Bhajans. Devotees and musicians

have taken them for their own purpose and have shaped them into inspiring songs. Some of these Bhajans have secular themes but possess agreat religious appeal. As a language, Braj-bhasha is admirably suited to the genius of Indian music. As a matter of fact, the whole of our Hindusthani Sangit has been written in Braj-bhasha which is its natural vehicle. Not only the verses of Surdas but those of the poets of " Ashtachhap " also have been converted into excellent Bhajans which have moved large masses of people. The music of these Bhajans is simple and moving and is not at all classical or technical.

The Kirtan and the Bhajan do not only satisfy Hindu religio s susceptibilities ; they are quite popular otherwise too. The Bhajan specially has made a characteristic impression on the public in general. The Radio and the Film have begun to exploit it for commercial reasons. Of course, we must remember that the Bhajan which is being shaped now in our cities is obsessed with innovations in language and technique. It lacks the original spiritual fervour. But it is gradually becoming sophisticated and commercialized. The simple, moving music of

the old Bhajans has been substituted by the artificiality of the new orchestra which is Anglo-Indian in character. But people will gradually get used to this nausea of city-music.

Whatever it may be, Kirtan and Bhajan are the living forms of our religious music and have attained universal popularity. They are the products of Hindusthan and not only of Hindu India.

*Varieties of Folk Music.* India is a land of folk lore and folk music though they have not been exploited. Different varieties of folk music are found in different places. Climate. geography, language, belief, racial genius and ways of living—all go to build up these.

(1) The music of the primitive communities whose traces we still find, exists in some form in places like Central Provinces and Chhota Nagpur. Forms of early group music can be found in the group-dances which one occasionally witnesses in places like Ranchi. But such varieties of folk music whether found among the Gonds or the Mundas require a special intimate study.

(2) The varieties of folk music existing in the hills among the hill-tribes and hill-communities though different from each other, have many common features. The folk melodies of Garhwal, some parts of the Punjab, have much in common between them. The "Pahari" of the Punjab is universally appreciated as a beautiful folk variety.

(3) But the real folk music and the varieties are found in the vast countryside of India. Folk music must be seen against the background of the village and the peasantry. Varieties like Chaita and Kajri, Baramasa and Sawan were born in the rural neighbourhood of Benares and Mirzapur. Baul and Bhatiali were born in the villages of Bengal. Punjab's Mahiya had similar origins. A close study of these reveals many other forms of folk music, which are intimately associated with folk-lore and folk-literature.

The poetry of folk music is couched in village dialects, which, though linguistically crude, are powerful and expressive. The verses of this village-poetry are sung and handed down through generations. There is not a theme of village

life on which verses have not been composed and sung by villagers themselves. The birth of a child, the death of a dear one, the drawing of the water from the well, the departure of the bride, the grinding of flour, the ploughing of the field, love, courtship, romance, separation, suffering and joy are some of the themes of these songs. They are an expression of the flesh and blood life of the villager with all his desires, passions, problems, suffering and joys. While there are songs for all there are songs composed and sung by women and others which are composed and sung by men. Printed collections of such songs and verses are now available in Hindi and can be profitably studied and enjoyed.

The music of these songs is intimately linked up with the genius of our music. In them we find vital germs of village folk music. Ragas like Pilu, Sarang, Durga, Sawan and Sorath are found in some crude shape in these songs. A close study of these songs reveals this fact very clearly. These songs are sung individually and collectively both according to theme and sentiment. While the orthodox pundit of language thinks that these songs are not linguistically unassailable, the imaginative musicians

and scholars, who are always eager to study new forms of music, can find in them much rich material. Another thing must be borne in mind. Different varieties of village folk music are found in different provinces and geographical regions. Their dialects may be different but their themes and sentiments are very much alike. Through them is expressed the culture and thought of rural India very powerfully.

Folk dances all over the world develop similar features. In India it is the same. Indian folk dances are worthy of serious study in their primitive and semi-primitive forms. Even the Manipuri, the Kandian and the Katha Kali styles are the consummate forms of their original varieties. The modern Kathak dance in spite of being a traditional and sophisticated style, has had its origin in the crude folk varieties of " Ras Lila " which was originally born in Mathura and the neighbouring district. Folk dances in India have never developed independently of folk music.

In recent years the attention of scholars and musicians has been drawn to folk music and and its forms. The average classical musician

is unaware of its existence and when he is told about it, he treats it with contemptuous unconcern. He is entirely mistaken if he thinks that folk music does not come within his domain. In fact, it should definitely come under his purview. The influence of this music on varieties like Thumri and Dadra has not been insignificant. It has exerted some influence on classical music too as far as local Raga-varieties are concerned. In years to come, musicians and scholars should make it a point to study its art-forms and expression-forms in relation to Indian culture and Indian music. Classical music has yet to penetrate into the folk music regions of India. It is useless for it to become the bulwark of a conservative art. The catholicity of Indian mind and Indian art cannot be proved as myths. Indian classical music can embrace folk music and even absorb some of its elements which are friendly to its spirit and character.

*Geet And Other Varieties.* Among the many products of ultra-modern Indian music, the Geet is the most popular variety. Born in film companies, it has been nursed up by film-stars, brothel-girls and Radio singers. Never has a

cross-breed been such a lovely product. What is a Geet? A Geet is a song of love sung by one or two lovers or cheats in tune or out of tune, with a soft and artificial voice to the accompaniment of an orchestra of Indian and European instruments which make much noise and produce little music. Who sings it? It is sung by a boy or a girl or both whatever their ages may be and is sung to some tune at any time and at any place. It seems to express the maudlin sentimentality and stark superficiality of our age. In its character also it is a cross-breed of the spirit of May West and the temperament of Young India.

Its music is almost always a curious mixture of Indian melody and a cheap jazzy imitation of Western music. Composers and innovators are employed by Radio Stations and Film Companies to compose new Geets with new effects whetever the means may be to reach such an end. It is cheap, sexy music, un-Indian in its essence. The youthful generation of boys and girls, who are studying in Colleges and Universities, have been carried off their feet by this music.

The geet exhibit a spirit of lawless freedom in our music. Nothing has harmed classical

music so much in the last one or two decades as this spirit of lawlessness. It has let loose forces which are positively detrimental to the progress of our music. The Geet and other varieties of film music are an indication of this. One can understand Tagore music and other free varieties of Bengali music because they are not without their roots of tradition. But one cannot reconcile oneself to freedom in art and music when it crosses its legitimate limits and banks on sheer effect. This is not art but artifice, not music but noise made pleasant and not sentiment but a prostitution of it.

But we are compelled to tackle one problem which faces us today. The Geet is definitely popular with large masses of people, from film-fans to Radio listeners. It is a popular variety easy to pick up. What should be the attitude of classical music towards Geet and other similar varieties ? Tolerance on one hand and discipline on the other. Classical musicians can afford to treat this variety with pity and tolerance. They can let it live without fear because such varieties die young. Its westernized character, its false technique, its bad music, its bad manners and its sentimental language must be condemned

most ruthlessly. Musicians, music-lovers and scholars must condemn its demerits and reform its character. The Geet is not necessarily an untouchable for classical musicians. But they can shape it in their own way. In fact, all such new varieties of film music and radio music are commercial hits. Classical music and classical musicians have no time to waste their energies on these left-overs. These varieties will one day prove themselves as still-born bastards. They are extremely popular no doubt, but they are not music. The genius of our music sits and smiles alone as they grow, multiply and perish.

In a country like India tastes in music are bound to have a vast range and variety. As individuals much depends on our upbringing, education and environment and also how we build up our tastes. Popular music provides a large scope to every individual for the satisfaction of his aesthetic desires. One comes across self-centred individuals whose training and upbringing in the tradition of orthodox classical music prevents them from enjoying any variety of popular music. They are the isolationists of our music. There are others who give first place

to classical music in their life because of personal preferences and predilections. But they enjoy popular music equally with the same zest. Some people are indifferent though not averse to classical music and cultivate a special taste for Thumri, Dadra and Ghazal. But there are some who are only fond of Ghazals and nothing pleases them so much as the singing of Ghazals. The religious-minded listeners are a special class whose taste lies in Kirtan and Kawwali. Varieties of folk music are enjoyed by large masses of our rural population. And the ultra-modern varieties are meant for the lower middle class and also middle class listeners on whose purse the film-industry feeds.

As a revolt against the discipline and severity of classical music, popular music will continue to exploit fresh patterns for its enrichment in future. The result will be a more popular music with rich and poor and beautiful and ugly varieties. Just as classical music will have to be tolerant towards popular music, the latter will always have to treat the former as a corrective.

## CHAPTER IV

# TORCH-BEARERS OF A DYING TRADITION

It is impossible to understand Indian music clearly without knowing something about its musicians. Mere theorists and scholars hardly outlive their age. They do not live for the masses. On the other hand, musicians live and endure. They are an institution, an epoch, whose voice is heard throughout the succeeding ages. They alone are the builders and custodians of every living music. They establish a whole tradition whose roots penetrate deep into the soil. The practical art of Indian music has been transmitted to us through generations of individual musicians whose contribution to the development of style and technique has been the greatest. Families or "Gharanas" of musicians have carried its tradition through each succeeding decade. For generations they have been the custodians of distinct family styles or Gharana "Gayaki" and "Baj".

*The Old School.* The styles known as Alap, Dhrupad, Hori and Dhamar are dying out. Men

like Haridas Swami, Tansen, Baiju Bawaare, and Gopal Nayak are not born in every century. They were the giants of the glorious age of Dhrupad. The style of Dhrupad had reached its pinnacle in their times. For a long time the four recognised styles of Dhrupad prevailed. In recent times the descendants of Tansen called the Seniya musicians, preserved this style in its old version. But now Dhrupad has fallen on evil days. We do not come across first-rate Dhrupadiyas these days. Here and there one may discover one or two Dhrupad-singers but they too are either old or out of form. The Seniya musicians of Jaipur also are no more.

Music-lovers, who have heard the music of past two decades, are familiar with the names of the famous Dhrupadists, late Zakiruddin Khan and the late Allabande Khan, the two distinguished brothers. They died over a decade back and are still considered as two outstanding Dhrupadists of modern times. Their father was the famous Bairamkhan, a celebrated musician who lived about a century ago. In recent times, Alap and Dhrupad found their outstanding interpreters in these two brothers. In orthodox exposition of the Raga, in technique

and style and also in their unusual command over the "Shrutis", they were superb. Their Dhrupad-style also was highly artistic in technique and some of their compositions were choicest among Dhrupad-compositions.

After their death, Nasiruddin Khan, the son of Allabande Khan, who was the most intelligent and imaginative among all his brothers, kept the fire of this tradition ablaze for some years. Unfortunately, he died in the prime of his life creating a void never to be filled up by any member of this illustrious family. He had an excellent voice and a sound training and also possessed a striking personality—a figure both handsome and graceful. Among other members of this family the names of Ziauddin Khan, Imam-Uddin Khan, Rahimuddin Khan, and Husinuddin Khan, remaining brothers of Nasiruddin Khan, may be mentioned. None of these, however, come up to the level of Nasiruddin Khan in imagination, intelligence, style and execution. They have only acquired some fundamentals of their family Talim. Ustad Karamat Khan, the grand old man of Jaipur, who was at one time a giant in the world of Alap and Dhrupad, is now an old decrepit man,

whose life and personality are symbolic of the Seniya tradition.

In Bengal the Dhrupad style flourished for a long time and produced a number of good Dhrupadists. Some years ago the name of Radhika Goswami was very famous as an expert Dhrupadist. None of his pupils, however, have carried this tradition forward in any appreciable manner. The names of Gopeshwar Banerji and the late Gopal Babu must be mentioned who made a mark in this style

Ustad Kale Khan of Muzaffarpur is another good Dhrupadist living today who seems to be fairly acquainted with the four recognised styles or " Bani " of Dhrupad. Unfortunately, he is old and age has impaired his voice considerably.

The famous Chandan Chaubey of Muttra, who, at one time, acquired some popularity in this direction, is now an old man stricken with deadly paralysis. If you talk to him and speak of old times, his face beams up with joy and then he starts telling you old tales in his inimitable way.

I do not think among the descendants of the late Ustad Wazirkhan of Rampur, there are any who sing Dhrupads.

Like the classical Dhrupad, the old styles of Hori and Dhamar are also dying out. The Khyalists generally do not cultivate these styles and are quite averse to them. The only Khyalist who is an exception to this rule, is Ustad Fayaz Khan, who apart from being a first-class Khyal-singer, renders orthodox Alap and also orthodox Hori and Dhamar in a superb manner. Today he stands unsurpassed in this field. Because of the difficult technique of Dhrupad, Hori and Dhamar which can only be acquired after careful traditional and scientific training, these styles do not exist now. The age of these styles has come to an end. The present-day votaries of these styles are relics of a great tradition which had a glorious past. In spite of rapid changes in classical music they have stood upright uninfluenced by the modern fads and fashions of music.

*The Khyal-Singers.* Some of the most outstanding schools of Khyal-style came into prominence in the nineteenth century. The

classical Dhrupad surrendered its rights to the romantic Khyal. Fifty years ago, some of the greatest Khyalists were living and some of their descendants are still living. Like the Dhrupad-singers, the Khyal-singers also have preserved their art through their families. This style was also handed down to posterity through succeeding generations of musicians. In fact, Indian music has always been so individualistic that its genius has invariably found its proper expression through individual personalities. While the roots of our present-day music are found in the traditions of the famous Gharanas or families of musicians, its history is found embodied in some outstanding personalities, from the age of Tansen to the present age. But these individual musicians cannot be separated from the tradition of their families which became important schools of thought in matters of style and technique. We can estimate the greatness of these musicians only in the perspective of the Gharanas. Even now the outstanding, living musicians are referred back to the traditions of their schools. But there is every likelihood that the family as a nucleus of tradition in music will gradually disintegrate and perish in music.

Among the great outstanding recognised schools of thought in Khyal-style, the following Gharanas may be briefly mentioned :—

*The Gwalior School.* In Gwalior originated the first orthodox school of Khyal-style. The celebrated musicians Haddu Khan, Hassu Khan and Nathu Khan established the Gwalior style which is also called "Lashkar Gayaki". It is maintained that they learned music from Bare Mohammad Khan of Tilwandi, an outstanding musician of his time. Among the descendants and pupils of Haddu Khan and Hassu Khan, their sons Rahmat Khan and Nisar Husain Khan made a name for themselves nearly a quarter of a century ago. Apart from these two, Shankar Pundit who was a disciple of these famous musicians, also attained great popularity in recent times. His son, Pundit Krishna Rao who is now running a music school in Gwalior, is among the few who have inherited the "talim" of this school. Raja Bhaiya of Punchhwale, a pupil of Shankar Pundit, is also a good Khyalist. Another musician who should be mentioned here is the late Ustad Inayat Husain Khan of Sahaswan who learned Khyal-style from Haddu Khan and was a very good Khyalist. At the

present time, his only well-known pupil is Ustad Mushtaq Husain of Rampur who is one of our good Khyalists today. Ustad Mushtaq Husain received "talim" from various other musicians also who exerted their individual influences on his style. That is why, his Khyal-style does not strictly conform to the representative Gwalior Gayaki though it is a correct orthodox style.

Here and there other individual musicians may be found who know the fundamentals of Gwalior Gayaki. But this great orthodox Gayaki of Khyal, which once sought its essential virtues in the purity of Raga, dignity of exposition and a powerful manly style enriched with all the niceties of artistic voice-production, has now fallen on evil days. This style of Khyal which was once nourished by the genius of musicians like Haddu Khan and Hassu Khan, is fast disappearing, and is also being usurped by many effeminate styles. The laymen may ask why? There is only one answer to this. The style of Haddu Khan and Hassu Khan emphasized certain essentials and made them indispensable for every Khyal-singer. These were : (*a*) a powerful male voice, (*b*) correct voice-culture, (*c*) Talim, (*d*) constant practice, (*e*) powerful

Tans enriched with "Gamak", (*f*) dignified rendering of the Asthai and the Antara, and (*g*) skilful exposition of the theme. These are some of the essential traits of a vigorous Khyal-style which is neither easily acquired by musicians nor is very popular with the average music-loving public. Hence the decline of this school.

*The Delhi School.* The founder of the Delhi Gharana of Gayaki was the illustrious Tanras Khan who was, fifty or sixty years ago, a powerful force in music and evolved a style which has left a definite mark on our present-day Khyal-music. This style flourished in the last decaying days of old Delhi when, in spite of the disintegration of the Moghul Court, the faint relics of past culture still existed as sad reminders. The Delhi style of Khyal betrays this to some extent in its language and composition.

As a style it was more liberal than the Gwalior style in the technique of its exposition. While the "bilambit" or slow Khyal of Gwalior was classical in restraint and orthodox in treatment, the slow Khyal of the Delhi style was less impersonal and more free from restraint and

was also enriched by many graces and flourishes. In the same way, the "Drut" or fast Khyals of Delhi also scored over the fast Khyals of Gwalior in matters of their composition and artistic design. As a style it was very popular with music-lovers and acquired a status which has lived to this day. The Delhi Gharana has left behind a legacy of some of the choicest Khyal-compositions of today.

After the death of Tanras Khan, the next great musician of this school was his son, Umrao Khan, who died some years ago at an advanced age and was one of the most noteworthy musicians of modern times. He inherited his father's style and was the last among those who preserved this Gayaki. Another good Khyalist of this school who was a descendant of Tanras Khan, was the late Shabhhu Khan who died some years ago. He was a musician of great parts.

When we review the glorious past of this illustrious Gharana and its present decline, we feel sorry. Who is to take the place of Tanras Khan and Umrao Khan ? Posterity will answer this question. Among the descendants of this Gharana there are none who can lead the way.

Nasir Khan is dead but he was not a representative descendant of this family. Abdul Karim Khan, the decrepit, old man, is living but he is just another descendant whose personality does not count much. As regards the younger members and followers of this great school we shall have to wait and see how they fare in future.

*The Patiala School.* This is comparatively a modern school whose roots are not in the traditions of the distant past. Among the pupils of Tanras Khan, Fateh Ali Khan and Ali Buksh have been the most outstanding. Even Umrao Khan was not equal to them as a musician. These two musicians were known all over India by the name of Alliya-Fattu. It is said that they first learned music from the celebrated Gokhi Bai. They used to sing together and were very gifted musicians. Few musicians in modern times have been gifted with a voice like theirs. They were first-rate Khyalists. Being highly imaginative musicians they enriched their Talim from other sources also. Thus, they evolved the Patiala School of Gayaki which was a rich and forceful style but which died with them.

Among their pupils the most outstanding were Miajan Khan and Kale Khan who died not long ago and had come to be recognised as very talented and skilful musicians of their time. People who had heard their music, knew their merits. Among the outstanding younger musicians of their time they occupied an important place.

As far as the descendants of Alliya-Fattu are concerned, their two sons may be mentioned. They are Ashiq Ali Khan and Akhtar Husain respectively. The former did not receive his Talim from his distinguished father but from his maternal-uncle, Meharban Khan. Fateh Ali Khan died when Ashiq Ali Khan was very young. At the present time, Ashiq Ali Khan is supposed to be the greatest Khyalist of the Punjab. But after judging his style critically we realise that it is hardly in any way a representation of the style of Alliya,—Fattu. On the other hand, it is a curious mixture of vocal acrobatics and a kind of technical jugglery of voice and is characterized by the absence of all those qualities which enrich the Khyal-style. Akhtar Husain has a stock of good compositions but does not possess the temperament and personality of a

good Khyalist. Ummed Ali Khan, the son of Pyar Khan, is another vocal acrobat, uprooted from his tradition.

Ghulam Ali Khan also belongs to the Patiala School because his father who was also named as Ali Buksh was a pupil of late Fateh Ali Khan. In his younger days, he was taught music by Kale Khan also. He is a very popular musician of the Punjab who can sing Khyals and popular varieties like Thumri with equal ease and charm. He is one of the best Khyalists among the younger generation of musicians. By virtue of having a good flexible voice and an imaginative temperament (and not by virtue of any orthodox Talim of which he has had very little) his music appeals to large sections of people not only in the Punjab but outside too.

The Patiala Gayaki is also almost dead. Some of the Punjabi compositions in Khyal-style, which were once gracefully rendered, are now as mere relics. The present-day Khyalists of the Punjab can hardly sing them in the orthodox way. The famous Alliya-Fattu knew the fundamentals of Khyal-gayaki. After their death, the Patiala style fell into wrong hands. With the lapse of time, some of its essential

traits disappeared and individual innovations stepped in. Other influences also began to shape it. Tradition, temperament and change, all moulded it. At the present time, this style is in full decay. Here and there individuals may be found who know something about this style. But they are ineffectual in every sense.

*The Agra School.* I have deliberately postponed a discussion of this school so long in order to see it in a truer perspective. In fact, there is no order-of-merit business in discussing these schools. They have only to be seen in their proper relation as styles. In fact, the Delhi and the Agra schools have grown side by side and were both influenced by the style of the musicians who were called "Kawwal Bachhe." The Agra school is related to the Gwalior school also in many essential points of technique and exposition.

We can trace this school to Haji Sujan Khan, its precursor, who was supposed to be a descendant of Tansen and lived long ago. In modern times, Ghaghhe Khuda Buksh, a direct descendant of Haji Sujan Khan, was considered the first to bring the Agra school into limelight. He was not only a contemporary of the famous Dhru-

padist, Bahram Khan, but also his very intimate friend. What "Ghaghhe" and "Bahram" meant to each other is evident from many anecdotes and stories which are current about these two musicians. Ghaghhe Khuda Buksh had two sons, Ghulam Abbas Khan and Kallan Khan. The former lived in Agra and the latter migrated to Jaipur. Ghulam Abbas Khan died four or five years ago after attaining the age of hundred and twenty. In music he inherited the tradition of a century and a half and occupied a place of veneration among contemporary musicians. Very few among his contemporaries came upto his level because as a musician he combined in him many valuable qualities which are often wanting in the music of many good musicians. His brother Kallan Khan was also a musician of great repute and received most of his Talim from him. He taught many pupils, among whom some are still living. Ghulam Abbas Khan was such a versatile musician that he was a master of many orthodox styles of Gayaki and could impart them to his pupils with equal competence and skill. He did not only train his younger brother, Kallan Khan but also Nathan Khan another member of the 'Agra school, who was a famous musician of his time.

Kallan Khan's son is the present Ustad Tassaduq Husain Khan, a former court-musician of Baroda who is now residing in Agra. Among musicians he is a pundit, a follower of the orthodox style who shuns violent innovations in music as much as he abhors publicity and limelight. At present he is engaged in writing a profound work on music which will make a definite contribution to the understanding of some puzzling problems of ancient and modern music. He is a saintly man who, in spite of sufferings, has devoted his whole life to the noble cause of music.

The three sons of Nathan Khan were Mohammad Khan, Abdullah Khan and Vilayat Husain Khan of whom the first two are dead. Mohammad Khan had a colossal memory for compositions. Abdullah Khan, who was a very talented and promising musician and who earned much fame during his youth, died an untimely death. The third son, Vilayat Husain Khan who is now in the service of Mysore Durbar, is a skilful musician whose style is neat and meticulous. He follows his family style and is an expert in "boL-tan".

Nathan Khan had another pupil, Bhaskar Rao Bakhle who was also known as Baskar Bua.

This Brahmin youth who became the pupil of a Muslim Ustad, served his Guru with all his love and devotion. The result was that soon the talented Bhaskar Rao became a first-class Khyalist. In the last twenty-five years, no Hindu musician earned a greater prestige and a greater appreciation. He was known all over India and died about fifteen years ago. There is no single Hindu musician today who can rise to the eminence of Bhaskar Rao as a Khyalist. He was a class by himself.

The greatest living representative of the Agra school, however, is Ustad Fyaz Khan. He embodies in him the genius of this illustrious Gharana. In his veins runs the blood of the Rangila family and the Agra Gharana. From his childhood he received his Talim from Ghulam Abbas Khan who was his grandfather from his mother's side. The old master took special care of him and taught him all the essentials and secrets of the art of Gayaki. From a precocous child he developed into a mature artist at an early age.

No musician of the Agra school has enriched its style so much as Ustad Fyaz Khan. From

the time of his youth he realized that for a good Khyal-singer mere Talim was not enough. In a genuine artist his talent of imitation is always substituted by his genius of creation. Tradition and creative genius must always be combined to reach a common goal. Ustad Fyaz Khan has definitely enriched the Gayaki of Agra school with his creative genius. But he is bound to its roots and owes all his creative inspiration to it. In him alone we find this superb blending of tradition and creative personality. While he has got himself admirably accustomed to the age of modernity, he belongs to the sacred old order, to the dispensation of all our glorious yesterdays.

But he is not a conservative or diehard in music just as he is not a faddist. His style provides him all the freedom he needs as an imaginative musician for innovation and creation. To him a Raga is a text which style can explain with full freedom. This is where a second-rate Khyalist would bungle and fail. He may not know how to utilize this freedom artistically. He may sacrifice the theme to the manner of presentation. Ustad Fyaz Khan can sing the old traditional style with inimitable grace.

His merits as a Khyalist are many and since he is the greatest Khyalist of his time, some of them may be briefly mentioned. 1) Every good Khyalist must have a good manly voice. His voice has unusual dignity and manliness. It is rich and powerful. As a result of systematic voice-culture, his voice now possesses many rich artistic qualities which every Khyalist must have. With these no artistic niceties in actual singing are possible. Such a rich powerful voice is not possessed by any Khyalist today. Without the virtues like "gamak", "soot", correct intonation, correct and scientific recording of notes and sweetness, no voice is fit for the Khyal style. A sweet, flexible voice is fit only for rendering the style of Thumri. (2) His conceptions of Ragas are scientific or Shastric (according to classical theories of the Shastras) and he always gives the correct picture of a Raga. (3) His Ragas are not only correctly sung but also most artistically rendered so as to interpret their emotions. But like others, he does not counterfeit them with hysterics and histrionics. (4) The dignity of his style often reminds us of the grand style of musicians like Haddu Khan and Hassu Khan. Nobody can beat him in the art of rendering the Asthai and the Antara. Most of his Khyals

are of the Dhrupad-Ang or Dhrupad variety and he renders them superbly. (5) He is perhaps the only Khyalist whose personality dominates his art. He can render a Khyal in any way he likes. (6) His stock of compositions is rich and has a vast variety and inimitable charm. (7) He is the only Khyalist today who can sing the orthodox styles of Alap, Dhrupad, Hori and Dhamar. (8) But the range of his genius and the variety of his styles are vaster still. His rendering of Thumri and Dadra reminds us of the great Mozzuddin. He converts Ghazals into very presentable things. Even here his genius has triumphed over tradition. From Alap to Thumri his genius occupies a range which other mediocre talents cannot even survey. That is why, as a Khyalist, his music has the greatest appeal for people today.

In summing him up for the ordinary man I would say this: As a man he is a gentleman with suavity and culture and is meek and almost child-like in his simplicity. As a musician, he is great, very great, because a genius like him is born only once in a century.

*Others.* (*a*) The famous musician late Mohammad Ali Khan-Kothiwal of the Manrang

family of Jaipur should also be mentioned in this connection. He had a son, Ashiq Ali Khan who did not earn much popularity.

(*b*) One of the last descendants of the Rangila family of Delhi is the old Ustad Muzzaffar Khan of Delhi who was considered a very good Khyalist in his earlier days.

(*c*) Ustad Alladiya Khan of Kolhapur who is now living in Bombay, and his late younger brother Haidar Khan, who were, originally, Dhrupad-singers took to the Khyal later and evolved a style of their own which is clever and skilful both. Alladiya Khan, the grand old musician of Bombay, enjoys much prestige among musicians, and once upon a time, was an expert Khyalist. His son Manjikhan, who died six years ago, was a very promising youthful musician.

Ustad Rajab Ali of Dewas is now old and decrepit. He was a very good Khyalist in his early days. Ustad Alladiya Khan seems to have exerted much influence on his style.

(*d*) What people today call the Kairana school of Khyal is hardly a school. The late Abdul Karim Khan seems to have belonged to this Gharana. Few musicians have made a

greater appeal to people than Abdul Karim Khan. He had a sweet, feminine voice which could produce astonishing effects. He was a born musician though not a born Khyalist. As a Khyalist he did not occupy a very important place. Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan, who is now the chief representative of this school, is not a Khyalist in any sense. He is a musician who has lost his way in algebra. One has never heard his Asthai and Antara in Khyal. He is the extempore mathematician of our music who has no orthodox style and no feeling. While I am prepared to take my hat off to him, he puzzles me a great deal.

*The Instrumentalists. (A) Vina* The Vina has disappeared with the Dhrupad. Bande Ali Khan and his art have perished. Even Wazir Khan, a recent memory, is no more. His grandson, Ustad Dabir Khan is a good Vina-player but knows nothing of the magic of Wazir Khan. Another great Binkar is Ustad Sadiq Ali Khan of Rampur State who is the son of the famous late Ustad Musharraf Khan of Alwar who was one of the greatest Binkars of his time. He is the best Binkar of the traditional style today.

Vichitra-Vina, a popular improvement on the Narad Vina, has its best exponents in Ustad Abdul Aziz Khan of Patiala and his younger brother Habib Khan Alladiya Khan.

(*B*) *Rabab.* After the late Mohammad Ali Khan, no one has played this ancient instrument with any skill.

(*C*) *Sur-Singar.* In modern times the late Nawab Chhamman Saheb of Bilsi played this instrument with great skill. No one among the musicians has taken his place as yet. Its "Baj" has disappeared.

(*D*) *Sarod.* The two outstanding Sarod players of today are Ustads Hafiz Ali Khan, and Allauddin Khan. The first is a great artist. His art has a personality and appeal both. The second is a pundit first and a musician second. His overdoing the Tar-paran on Sarod is often boring from the point of view of art.

(*E*) *Sitar.* The age of Amrit Sen, Rahim Sen and Nihal Sen came to an end more than half a century ago. They were the greatest Seniya Sitarists of India in modern history. They were wizards, one to all. The late Fida Husain of Jaipur was also a Seniya Sitarist. Another great Sitarist of the Seniya Gharana was

Amir Khan who exerted a powerful influence on the Sitar styles of the modern times. His greatest pupil was Barkatullah Khan whose pupil was the late Ashiq Ali Khan of Benares. Barkatullah Khan did not play any Alap but only the "Gat tora".

The two conventional styles of Sitar which are prevalent today, are Masit Khani and Razakhani. The former was invented by Masit Khan of Delhi and is also called the Delhi style or the slow variety. The latter was invented by Ahmad Raza Khan of Lucknow and is called the Lucknow style, or the Purab Baj or the fast variety. In modern times there have been two Sitarists who have played these styles to perfection. They stand unsurpassed in this field. They are Imdad Khan and his son, the late Inayat Khan. The former died long ago and the latter died only five years ago. The late Inayat Khan was the illustrious son of an illustrious father and for a quarter of a century he was by far the best Sitarist of India. No living Sitarist today has the finish and perfection of this great musician. While he has left a rich legacy, the gap he has created will not be filled up for many more years. His younger brother Wahid

Khan, the second son of Imdad Khan, does not come up to his level. Wilayat Khan the only son of Inayat Khan is a lad of many parts and he may one day prove himself the worthy son of a worthy father. "The best is yet to be" we would say.

Among other Sitarists the late Babu Khan was a man of unusual talents and belonged to the family of the famous Binkar, Bande Ali Khan. Rahmat Khan of Dharawar is also famous. Rameshwar Pathak of Darbhanga is a talented and imaginative Sitarist. Among the lesser fry, Yusuf Ali Khan of Lucknow and Fazal Husain of Gwalior may be mentioned. Hamid Husain Khan of Itawah is another good Sitarist of parts. But he seems to be decaying fast. Of course, we must not forget Fazal Husain of Gwalior who died just recently and was known far and wide.

***Pakhawaj.*** Kudau Singh has been called the king among Pakhawaj-players. Among his followers Makhan Lal, Parwat Singh, Ajodhya Prasad and the late Shambhu Prasad may be mentioned as of special note. And among the pupils of Nana Saheb Panse, who was also a

great Pakhawaj-player and evolved a technique different from Kudau Singh's, Pandit Shankar Rao and Pandit Sakha Ram are known all over India. Unfortunately, this instrument is becoming rarer day by day.

*Tabla.* Among the famous recognized schools of Tabla-players, Lucknow and Delhi are the most outstanding. Though other styles like those of Tilwandi, Ajrala, Meerut and Benares are also mentioned by people, the Lucknow and the Delhi styles are the oldest and are products of original traditional styles. Munne Khan and Abid Husain Khan of Lucknow were great Tabla players. Abid Husain Khan's brother Chhuttan Khan and his nephew Wajid Khan are the present-day representatives of this Gharana. Wajid Khan is one of the best Tabla-players of India and is, perhaps, one of the few who can accompany Kathak dance. The late Nathu Khan, the greatest exponent of Delhi Baj in his time, is no more. The Benares Baj, which was originally an imitation of the Lucknow Baj, produced two excellent Tabla-players, the inimitable accompanist Beeru who died some years ago and Kanthe whom people still hear on occasions. Thirku, almost the best Tabla-player

of today, belongs to the Meerut and Ajrala schools. Qadir Buksh of the Punjab, is the last representative of Tilwandi Baj. Karam Ilahi, another good Punjabi Tabla-player, lies in obscurity. Among other famous Tabla-players of today Masit Khan, Moulvi Ram, Azim Khan and Shamsuddin may be mentioned.

*Dance.* The two famous Gharanas of Kathak are Lucknow and Jaipur, the former being its birthplace and home. "Kalka" and "Binda" of Lucknow were known all over India and the latter had no match in the country. The former had three sons who are now known everywhere as Achhan, Luchhu and Shambhu. Mohan Lal, Sohan Lal and other *well-known dancers* of Jaipur are also famous. Kartik and Jailal are also worthy of mention. Though this style is not in decay, its only serious competitor seems to be the new-fangled Kathakali style of Udai Shankar.

*Bais.* The great Bais of the past like Jadi, Gokhi, Zohra, Mushtari and Malka were masters of their art. Kesarbai, Hira Bai, Lakshmi Bai, Gangu Bai and Roshan Ara are good musicians, but neither they have inherited a tradition nor

will they leave one. The first group was a galaxy of stars; the present set is only hundred power candle-light. The former represented genius, the latter indicates only talent.

The vocalists and instrumentalists described above are our national assets; the rest are decent liabilities, mere necessary evils. They alone show what great things our music achieved in the past and how much or how little we have been able to preserve. In their art we find the strong roots of our music tradition. But the inevitable day will come when the stars which shine in the firmament of music will fade away, never to shine again. Will new stars take their place? Yes, some stars will shine faintly. Others may only shoot and die. And a day may come when some other new stars may rise and fill the sky and the earth with ancient light and splendour. Posterity will wait and see.

The journey is long and the way is dark. The genius of our music struggles desperately to reach its goal. Only the torch-bearers can show us the way.

## CHAPTER V

# THE AGE OF THE PRINTED TEXT BOOK

There is no such thing as a modern renaissance of classical music. Though the educated classes have been lip-servicing it long, I am not aware of any renaissance in music in any real sense of the term. Even if one were to take liberties with language and say that there has been a "revival" of music in recent years, it would only mean large-scale propaganda in cold print. As a revival it has no roots. Every renaissance has a spirit of creative spontaneity and its roots go deep down into the soil. Its divine passion has a demonaic fierceness which compels it to march onwards. The so-called modern "revival of music" is only a large-scale activity which has made quite a stir in recent times. But it is hardly a renaissance in any sense of the word.

But even then this nation-wide propaganda cannot be brushed aside with a smile or a shrug of the shoulders. Its influence and utility cannot

be underestimated. We have to reckon with the force of this organized propaganda of music and also judge its repercussions on music in general. Among those who propagated the gospel of classical music in recent times, the names of Vishnu Digambar and Bhatkhande are the most outstanding. Their names will live in the annals of Hindustani classical music as its two most outstanding public servants who worked selflessly for its noble cause.

*Vishnu Digambar.* Maharashtrian by birth, took to music at an early age. There are stories and anecdotes about his early training. In spite of the protests of his orthodox elders, he obstinately insisted on learning music from a Muslim Ustad. His real Guru however was Bal Krishna Bua, a pupil of Haddu Khan. Born in a respectable orthodox family, from an early age he applied his talents to music. But he soon realized that while it was a great thing to be a musician, the greater was to take up the noble cause of music and work hard for its general dissemination. India knows him as a savant of music who dedicated his life to this great cause. Among his contemporaries, he was not ranked as a very great musician but he made his mark in

his own field. He had all the equipment of a good music scholar and an impressive musician, and this helped him a great deal in carrying on his propaganda of classical music on scientific lines.

The first thing which he did was to write simple elementary books on music and also invent a system of notation for recording compositions of Ragas. His books proved very helpful and his notation, though difficult, was utilized and adopted by many. He also established music schools all over India and probably the first was started in Lahore. Today his music schools exist in places like Bombay, Poona, Lahore, Nagpur, Allahabad and other towns and are scattered far and wide. A uniform system of coaching has been adopted by all these schools which hold their examinations and grant certificates and diplomas to successful candidates. One must grant that these small institutions have contributed much towards the general spread of music in the public.

I do not believe that there is any Vishnu Digambar school of thought as far as recognised Gayaki is concerned. Though this school has

inculcated a kind of uniformity and sameness in the style of its representatives, it has not evolved any definite style which musicians may recognise and adopt. In fact, even the styles of its outstanding representatives essentially differ. Take for instance, V. N. Patwardhan, Narayan Rao Vyas Onkarnath Thakur, and D.V. Puliskar who may be rightly considered the most outstanding- and well-known pupils of the late Vishnu Digambar and representatives of his school.

*Onkarnath Thakur* is considered to be the most outstanding pupil of the late Vishnu Digambarji. This is in spite of the fact that he does not represent the style of his Guru in any appreciable manner. The general impression is that he is one of the greatest musicians of India today. This is also in spite of the fact that he is not really a great musician. Curiously enough, his reputation has survived these paradoxes. The verdict that he is a great musician comes from such unreliable quarters and is backed by such meagre authority that it can hardly be treated as a judgement. The authorities and critics of our music must have their say even in the midst of the noise which the public makes.

Two musicians have puzzled me most. They are Abdul Wahid Khan and Onkarnath Thakur. They do not puzzle me with their originality so much as with their persistence to live in modern classical music. The former is anything but a Khyalist. It is curious that he is ranked among the first-rate Khyalists of the country without possessing a proper Khyal-style. He treats music as mathematics and that is why, on occasions, his interpretation of a Raga is an exercise in algebra. Though he is clever and consistent, he sings from his head and not from his heart. The latter has received much publicity within the last few years. I have not been able to account for this fact. It is inconceivable, by what stretch of imagination, he is regarded as a great musician. It is amazing that his amazing mediocrity has been labelled as genius. Probably, at a music conference "every numerous assembly is a mob". It is this mob which has created him.

Onkarnath is a born musician. He is emotional and melodramatic on the stage. Even his music is half emotion and half improvisation. He possesses his own style; his conception of Ragas is singular and un-orthodox; his

stock of compositions is definitely good ; his technique has no uniformity though it has plenty of variety; and his presentation of a theme, which is clever, effective and emotional, exhibits the virtues of an emotional and popular art. His bhajans enhance the dignity of his Khyal-style and satisfy the religious susceptibilities of an emotional audience. He creates wonderful effects. The result is like a true genius he can throw all style and technique overboard and yet evolve a new, freelance extempore style of his own which suits his temperament admirably. Temperamentally, he seems to be more familiar with the style of Abdul Karim Khan than with the style of his own Guru. I have often wondered how he has made such a wonderful use of his voice and talents. And I suppose in our present age of license and freewill, when judgement and criticism are suspended, he has managed to hold his own and has earned public approval with much credit.

*Vinayak Rao Patwardhan.* is a musician of mediocre talents possessing a fairly good style. He is neat and upto the mark. Though he is not so impressive as Onkarnath, he is more

correct and scientific as a musician. He respects some tradition and never attempts to be brilliant for the sake of creating sheer effect. He is a teacher first and a musician second. He is, in fact, propagandist-musician number one of the Vishnu Digambar school. He is in many ways indispensiable to this school.

*Narayan Rao Vyas* is propagandist number two of the same school. He has a good voice which he has most appropriately adapted to his second- rate music. He lacks originality and initiative but his talents are admirably suited to his catchy classical songs. The public has given him publicity and money both. He is the gramophone version of classical music.

*D. V. Pulaskar* is the youngest musician (second son of late Pandit Vishnu Digambar, of this school, with plenty of promise but the training he is receiving is insufficient. I wish he had sat at the feet of some distinguished master.

As a theorist *Bhatkhande* was much superior to Vishnu Digamber and his contribution to modern classical music is definitely greater than the latter's. He was a vakil but he hardly served his profession. At an carly

period of his life he was drawn to music. He learned it from various teachers. But being highly intelligent his approach to classical music was not that of a layman. He did not approach it only as a connoisseur of art but also as a scholar.

As a scholar of music, he shows an intimate knowledge of various music treatises of the past. Not only this. His judgement helps him to sift the material and formulate a fairly systematic theory of music. This is an achievement of great merit because it does provide some kind of basis for an agreement among the conflicting schools of thought. His "Sangit Paddhati" enunciates a system of music with which all musicians may not agree but it is surely clever and well-argued. His "Lakshya Sangit" and "Abinav Rag Manjari" are works of great merit. In recent times no scholar has surpassed Bhatkhande in the knowledge of the Shastras, in clarity of thought and in the complete understanding of the spirit of Hindusthani classical music. His classification of Ragas under ten Thathas is definitely a bold step.

Though he never turned out to be a musician in the real sense of the term, he is said to have

received his music lessons from Mohammad Ali Khan Kothiwal of Jaipur, who was a descendant of the distinguished Manrang family. He had a sensitive ear for music and that is why he was able to collect hundreds of old compositions which are now found in his Kramik Pustak Mala publications. Many of these compositions are popular among modern musicians and are sung by them. It is amazing how it was possible for him to collect so many compositions from different sources and musicians. Along with these compositions, he gives his own compositions mostly "Lakshan Geets". Some of these are definitely good and show to what an extent he had understood the spirit of old compositions whose models he copied. But while his collection of compositions is amazing, it must be made clear that many of these compositions which have on them the stamp of recognition given by the great musicians of the past and the present, have been given a garbled version. It was either due to Bhatkhande's own incomplete understanding of their original version or due to the notation in which they were written. Whatever the reason mav be, their original version is often lost.

This brings us to the system of notation which Bhatkhande invented. It is more simple, more convenient and more legible than Vishnu Digambar's. To say the least, it is the simplest and the most scientific system of notation now existing in Indian music. It suits the child and the adult both. It has now been universally recognized and accepted by all sections of people. Teachers, writers, musicians, all are using it freely. And I suppose this system of notation has given a great impetus to the general dissemination of music in the country.

In classifying the Ragas under the Thatha-system Bhatkhande was devising means by which music could become a part of education, and serve the nation. In adopting music as a subject of study, examination boards and educational institutions, have accepted his notation and his classification of Ragas. There are music institutions in Baroda, Bombay, Gwalior and Lucknow which are pushing forward this system systematically. The Marris Music College of Lucknow is now the nucleus of this system. In spite of the fact that this college has an ill-paid and ill-equipped staff and suffers from a paucity of funds, it has managed to serve classical music in its own humble way. The Government and

the public, both, have lent it their moral and financial support. For eighteen years the slogan of the College has been "Where musicians have failed, music graduates will succeed". For all these years the College has courageously clung to this motto.

Just as there is no such thing as a Vishnu Digambar school of style, there is no such thing as a Bhatkhande system of thought in classical music. He has done much to systematize and clarify the principles of classical music and has also established a workable plan for liberal education in music. He has made a solid contribution to modern Hindusthani classical music and his name will be remembered long. While he may have failed to recapitulate the spirit of the creative musicians of the past, he has surely come to be regarded as a great profound scholar of music in modern times. He had the heart of a musician and the brains of a Pundit.

I think it is right that if you want to kill Shakespeare you only have to make him a text-book. If Tansen was shown a printed copy of his Dhrupadas in modern notation, he would have been flabbergasted. If Adarang and Sadarang

had seen their own compositions butchered in cold print, they would have gone mad. Even our present-day musicians feel that printed text-books of music smell a bit castoroilish. With the exception of a majority of educated musicians who look back to past for sustenance, quickly develop a constitutional aversion for printed notation. There is something in their temperament which rebels against innovations of this kind. They cannot reconcile to music in print.

It seems that the printed text books have come to stay, and that notation is going to endure everlastingly. Notation in Indian music is a recent discovery and is an imitation of the West. For centuries our musicians did not require it for any creative purpose. The modern man requires it because it suits his short memories and limited visions admirably. As a method of writing and recording compositions, notation is a convenient device and fulfils the needs of the average music-lover and music-student. It stimulates the propaganda of music. But as a device for recording old compositions, it is an unreliable method not always to be trusted by people. It may prove very helpful in the day-to-day

teaching and learning of music in schools and institutions, but its uses are limited and it cannot fulfil the higher needs of music.

It has been possible for the Western notation to record and preserve the spirit of Beethoven's "Unfinished Symphony" and the music of Mozart, Schubert and even Wagner who has been called the "resume of modernity". The genius of our music cannot be reduced to any form of notation. Not even the most scientific system of notation can convey the spirit of Ragas and their compositions. Such a highly individualistic art as classical music in which the personality of the musician counts a great deal and which abounds in numerous niceties and embellishments, cannot be transcribed in notation. Notation always fails to catch the spirit of great compositions whose fascination is elusive and subtle. Ragas as flesh and blood ideas require other higher means of artistic interpretation. They have a character of their own which cannot be expressed through the dead symbols of notation. Notation can only give us a faint idea of this subtle character. It only gives a vague impression which has to be considerably improved upon, to make it a correct picture. Even its limited

benefits cannot be made fully available without the help of a Guru. Such is the limited scope of notation. The danger is that a young student of music often feels he can dispense with his Guru and depend wholly on notation. But this is not all. The zealous reformer of music also feels that he can recapitulate and preserve the traditions of music with the help of notation. Both are sadly mistaken. Notation is just notation, a skeleton of bleached bones.

It is my personal belief that we can close down all our music schools without doing any positive harm to the heritage of classical music. For centuries our music could afford to endure gloriously without them. Apart from doing general propaganda for music, these schools serve no creative purpose. They neither inherit nor transmit the genius of our music. Their mushroom growth is symptomatic of our organic decay. But the modern man would say "They are necessary, nay, indispensable. Without them, how can our children learn music ? They serve the noble cause of music". I would say "You are right but you have to examine the whole matter more carefully".

Every music school suffers from very serious limitations. I personally feel fine arts should

never be taught the way they are taught today. Take a music school and examine the method it employs in imparting a practical knowledge of music to its students. The first wrong assumption a music school makes is that classical music can be taught to every one whether he has the aptitude for it or not. A heterogeneous crowd of students with talents or without talents with aptitude or without any aptitude, completes the enrolment of a music school. The second wrong assumption is that music is as much a subject of the syllabus as geography, history and banking. Thus classes are conducted according to a dead routine. Those who teach are often just teachers and not musicians. Hence they lack personality and the touch of the born musician. Classes are held for an hour or so on the working days of the month, leaving out many months of holidays. A course is followed and Ragas are taught like lessons in Greek. It is simply preposterous that students should be taught difficult Ragas like Marwa and Todi in a week's time and that too in the first elementary stage of their study. Weeks and months are devoted to the eternal task of finishing a set course in time. A music school is 'chiefly preoccupied with this business of teaching a course

of studies no matter whether the students get any appropriate conception of the Ragas or not. The business of the teacher is to teach the allotted course and not to initiate the young aspirants into the spirit of the Ragas. The result is a pell-mell. Students gradually give up all initiative and treat music as botany or zoology.

As regards the music examinations which are conducted by music schools, one can only say that they turn out graduates and no musicians. They are a pleasant farce. If a diploma or a certificate is a hall-mark of proficiency, music schools are never miserly about granting it. These examinations give a stamp of recognition to all successful candidates who go out into life with very poor equipment. They may find jobs (and this one of the main functions of a music-institution) but they forfeit the honour of becoming musicians.

A system of music education, which is based on notation, is bound to miss its mark. In what way are our music institutions helping the younger generation of boys and girls to understand the spirit of traditional music ? In what way is our present music syllabus giving a

correct idea of Hindusthani classical music to the students of music? A system which is completely divorced from the traditions of the creative art of music, and which aims at mere propaganda, is incomplete and insufficient both. Institutions of music are good in their own way as far as they give a smattering of music to the younger generation. But their self-sufficiency shuts out all progress. They begin to live in their accustomed grooves of thinking and hate to be shocked out of them. They develop narrow visions and serve limited interests. They often become centres of vested interests and are sustained by the poison of provincialism. They set up their own theories of music and pronounce their own separate judgements on music. The result is that music institutions in this country have no vital common interests, the only common interest being the granting of certificates to dozens of candidates every year. None of these, for instance, have tackled the problem how to teach music to children. Instead of becoming means they become an end in themselves. The amazing thing is that they are multiplying every day.

It is my contention that the modern system of music-education through notation is funda-

mentally hostile to the tradition and heritage of classical music. The subtle manner in which certain erroneous ideas are inculcated into the minds of the students should be marked. Among many of these myths which are made fashionable by the educated man whose sons and daughters receive training in liberal arts, are : (*a*) that the training given by the professional Ustads is unscientific, (*b*) that they are "uneducated" and unimaginative, (*c*) that they occupy an inferior social status, and (*d*) that they are behind times and cannot keep pace with the progressive music of the modern man. I do not think any lies could be more convenient than these. It is definitely a kind of malicious propaganda launched against our professional musicians. The fact is that these Ustads and Pandits alone know how to teach scientific music on traditional lines. They are highly imaginative and intelligent and have been lucky enough to escape academic education. It is bourgeois to talk of their inferior social status. In a free and liberal society they would be ranked with the prophets and seers of a country. They are also not behind times. They are custodians of an ancient heritage whose high achievements are definitely much ahead

of our time. The average educated man will have to improve the powers of his intellect and imagination to be able to appreciate classical music. His half-deaf ears will have to become more sensitive and his artistic sensibilities will have to be sharpened a good deal for the appre-ciation of first-rate music.

But whatever the real truth may be, it is a fact that the tastes of the middle class man tip the scales of music today. His personal fancies and predilections have set up a reign of terror. His tastes are the only refined tastes. His judge-ment seems to rule out every other judgment. His will is the final will of all. He is the crowned king of the mob and he alone is the mouthpiece of its passions. His printed text book of music is the shortest cut to knowledge. His music syllabus is the gospel of mellenium in art. His music schools are the sacred shrines of learning. His certificates and diplomas are the royal seals of recognition. His propaganda of music through a system of notion promises a panacea for all ills. He will destroy the past and build the future of our music. He is now busy creating a new progressive musician for India. He has already created the new musician

of the new age. This new musician inherits nothing from the past because trained as he is against the background of text-book notation, his style is also of the printed variety. It is he who is going to guide the destiny of classical music. Let us wait and see.

CHAPTER VI

# MUSIC CONFERENCE : FILM : RADIO

More than two decades ago music conference came into vogue. We still cherish the happy memories of the first-rate music conferences which were then held at Benares, Baroda and Lucknow, in which some very outstanding musicians participated. What a galaxy of masters it was! Twenty years ago in the city of Lucknow gathered musicians whose names will live in modern music. Who can forget the inimitable Fida Husain of Rampur, a superb Sarod player of his time? He was a wizard to the tips of his fingers. The slim figure of the famous Biru of Benares, who is no more, still comes vividly before our eyes. We can recall to our minds the scene when he played Tabla to the accompaniment of Allaud-din Khan's Violin. It was a tough fight but Biru came out victorious unscathed. Greater than him was Abid Husain of Lucknow whose pupil Biru was. In recent times, Nathhu Khan of Delhi and Abid Husain of Lucknow were supposed to be the two best representatives of

their respective Gharanas. Abid's skilful performance that day still rings in the ears. The Rampur and Maihar bands were excellent and will long be remembered. There was that pleasant figure of Chandan Choube of Muttra who now lies stricken with paralysis. I can never forget that scene when Biru accompanied this vocalist on Tabla. That Thumri in Bhairavi still comes back to us. Ali Buksh, the well known Khyalist of Lahore, was there. How popular he became! Among the old masters Ustad Kallan Khan of Jaipur sat and presided like a deity. The illustrious musicians Zakiruddin Khan and Allabande Khan of Alwar were there. I can still picture them singing on the stage with the youthful Nasiruddin sitting behind them. Who could beat them in Alap and Dhrupad? They were a class. The famous Ustad Fyaz Khan topped the list of the Khyalists. People still remind him of his Multani, Jaunpuri and Bharavi which he sang at the Conference. One cannot forget the day when he sang the well-known Thumri in Bhairavi "***Babul mora naiher chhuto jay***". Imagine the historic Baradari in which this song was sung. Imagine the string of old memories. Conjure up the Lucknow audience which sat there. The great Ustad

closed his eyes for a moment and conjured up the tragic history of Oudh. Then he started interpreting the meaning of the text. What next ?......The climax came. Dozens of people were found in tears. The words of the song came back to the conference with all their poignancy.

Such conferences were never held again in India. Our present-day music conferences cannot rise to their level. But the question is, why should people hold music conferences ? What are the aims and objects of a music conference ? The primary aim of holding a music conference is to bring together at one place a number of outstanding musicians who represent various styles in music and who exert a great influence on the music of today and the music of tomorrow. A real music conference, in fact, is a body of experts, musicians and scholars whose deliberations should be of special importance to the progress of classical music. It must both entertain and instruct. A conference actuated by vital motives, aims at creating an atmosphere of genuine appreciation. But this can only be done by providing an ample scope for critical faculty to function. When musicians and scholars will sit down to discuss

dispassionately great problems of theory and art, much good will come out of these serious discussions. Every music conference must have a fanatical obsession for research and enquiry. We cannot possibly establish an academy of Indian music in India unless the problems and issues which baffle us every day excite our imagination. The different Gharanas and schools of thought have to be brought closer to each other without destroying their own individuality. Problems pertaining to the theories of classical music, conceptions of Ragas, style and Talim have to be discussed from different angles. The scholars and the musicians both have a moral duty to perform. They have to arrive at some definite decisions and lead others who follow them. They have to do their share in educating people in the art of appreciation. A music conference which has such aims, not only engages itself in research and enquiry, but also inspires musicians to exhibit their highest art before the audience. Such an audience will learn to be sensible and truly appreciative. It will inspire its musicians as much as they would endeavour to shape its taste and judgement.

But the music conferences held today have no such ideals. There is no end to these "All

India" music conferences. Some of these have been quite representative gatherings in the past and have also provided a real feast of music for large audiences in some important cities. But none of these have even attempted to solve issues and controversies which face our music today. An All India music conference, today, is neither representative in character nor symbolic of the spirit of classical music. It is neither music nor conference. It is a pompous show organised by some influential organizers who have either power or money at thier command. Long-winded patrons and secretaries inaugurate it with long and boring speeches which are exercises in mutual admiration and in which the virtues of our ancient music are described in metaphor, hyperbole and poetic exaggeration. With the veneer of middle class culture is mixed a sufficient quantity of red-tapism and snobbery. In the royal front seats meant for the aristocracy of good taste and good judgment, sit those who either yawn intermittently or gossip quite garrulously in their more lucid intervals. To them music is a luxury, which they think is quite conventional to enjoy once a year. The rest of the audience consists of many mediocre lovers of music whose applause is more worthy than

their judgment. The programme is composed of first-rate classical music, third-rate classical music, popular music, unpopular cmusi no music, classical dances, sacred dances, profane dances, ultra-modern dances, and other items,—all printed on fine paper. The listeners constitute a mob which enjoys adult franchise in the new democracy of music. Every musician has to cater to it.

What can we expect from a music conference which just entertains a mob of ticket-holders? Such a conference treats musicians as hirelings whose duty it is to entertain poeple by some means. It also becomes a hot-bed of politics sowing seeds of communalism among the musicians and audiences both. The organizers have never thought of this and willingly or unwillingly, they often fall a prey to vested interests which dominate a music conference. With such serious limitations, no music conference, however honest its intentions may be, can set up any principles of refined taste and solid judgment. It is bound to encourage elements which are detrimental to the cause of music. Musicians should not be judged by the plebiscite of an emotional mob which keeps swaying from one extreme to an-

other. No music conference should attempt to pass a judgment on real musicians because it is too ill-equipped to do so. In matters of appraisal and judgment, it must surrender its rights to competent authorities and eminent critics. They alone can speak with authority. In the same way, musicians should not be expected to stoop down to the level of the listeners. Their primary duty is to lift them up to their level. As wage-earners, as mere paid artisans of a show, they can never enjoy the right of doing so. In what way does a music conference help and inspire musicians to give their best? In spite of all its noble pretensions which it conveniently bolsters up in the public press, it often reduces itself to the level of a carnival or a circus. A conference which lets its audience have the chance of hearing the music of the glamour-girls and show-boys of the screen, is utterly incapable of setting up a corrective of judgment and appreciation. I wish many of these music conferences would not be held at all. They are just an annual epidemic which must be controlled.

*Films.* The screen in India is an institution. The films have come to stay. And the

film companies are a powerful capitalistic force.

As an Institution the Indian Cinema is coming into limelight. Its repercussions on Indian Society are many, which no one can deny. It has opened up new avenues of employment for middle class people. It has set up its own standards in society which are novel and exciting.

India is becoming film crazy. The fraternity of film fans consists of all ranks and sections of people. In every big city cinema-houses are multiplying every day. Crowds of people find in these films plenty of fun and enjoyment for their dull lives. In fact, all kinds of films—from mythological films to stunt films—have a chance of being swallowed by huge masses of film-goers. The theatre in India has been eclipsed by films. The national stage lies buried in oblivion. Films provide a multitude of sensations which suit the temperament of the age. The most popular pictures, often, are those which interpret the latest fads and superficialities of the age.

And what are film-companies ? They are, often, a creation of capitalists whose sole

endeavour is to get the largest profits from their investments. Pictures which pay have the greatest chance of being produced by the directors. Every film-company is a capitalist pure and simple. It pays minimum wages for maximum hours of work. Good pictures are an exception. But the capitalistic forces working behind these huge concerns would scarcely allow the production of first-rate films because they often do not pay so well. All considerations of art have to be abandoned and preference has to be given to the artifice of the camera. What captures imagination and moves and satisfies mass emotions ensures cent per cent success.

When we come to examine what is called as film-music, we are faced with a staggering proposition. The whole thing assumes the proportions of a difficult problem. What is called film-music is as important to us as the Jazz is to the American. It seems to hold us in its grip. Hundreds of people in our country have gone crazy about film songs. I feel like saying, I do not know why. The young and the old, both, seem to be infected with their divine venom. There is something in them which satisfies the taste of the people. Every

film song which has become famous in the last few years has performed this function. Take the maudlin sentimentality of those songs which the New Theatres of Calcutta gave some years ago. People were swept away by this wave of sentimentality. The famous concern went on exploiting the emotions of the film-fans until a time came when people were no more moved. There was such a tedious repetition of plot, story, design, dialogue and music in many of these films that people got fed up in no time. Apart from these, the film songs which are very popular these days are those which are either frightfully frivolous or have a kind of jazz smartness. Bombay is the home of frivolities in film-music. It is the capital of all marketable music. Many of our film-songs are just funny and catchy. They are just delightfully smart capturing the imagination of even as matter-of-fact an individual as a cigarette-seller. This seems to be the criterion of its popularity.

There is nothing on earth which has done a greater harm to classical music than the music of the films. Starting from Bengal in the guise of pseudo-transcendentalism, it has travelled to Bombay and settled there on its feet as a respect-

able, progressive art. The music directors of these film concerns have taken undue liberties with every variety of good music. Classical music has been butchered and slaughtered in the slaughter-house of film-companies. Music directors have made it a sumptuous variety of the wayside grill. It has been chopped, minced and roasted to make it marketable. The food of the giants has been spiced with frivolity and sex-appeal to make it look and taste like the food of the modern pygmies. In fact, there is no place for classical music in a film which fetches money. The modern film-music in India is a curious mixture of the varieties of folk-music, theatrical music, cheap, popular music and the sentimental types. Its main object is to create effects by fair means or foul. If the vast multitude of the film-fans is emotionally aroused, the conclusion is that the aesthetic sense of the average man has been sufficiently satisfied. The average man cannot be defined in a worse manner.

On the whole, the music of the films, however entertaining and popular it may be, has no real worth. Music directors who invent, borrow and steal among themselves, are least competent to carry on free-lance experiments in

film-music. What they are producing and naming today, is mostly third-rate music on mass scale. They just hanker after effects and exploit all means for the box-office hit. Every film company is a panderer in this respect.

Film music is just third-rate sob-stuff. Our film companies have tried to create a second Hollywood in India. This Indian Hollywood will consist of glamour girls, slim, tall, feminine looking male stars, and all kinds of mannerisms. Our actors and actresses look pampered, lionized and romantic. They come from some dreamland where middle class respectability does not go. What dreams, what illusions and what pet hallucinations of modern life lie shut up in this new paradise of film companies! Beneath the surface of the sugar-coating lies the hard crust of poverty, brothel-airs, jealousy, naked sex and mutual profiteering and blackmailing. From such a golden paradise come our favourite-film songs, hummed and sung either by soft and shrill feminine voices or by heavy and flat male voices. They take us to another paradise of make-believe. In between lies our Indian earth.

The music of our films is surely nauseating in spite of its being new and exciting. Apart

from being third-rate and cheap, it is un-Indian in character. The orchestra, the background music and the musical effects are a fourth-rate imitation of the third-rate European music. It is amazing with what readiness most of our film companies have utilized this method to create appeal. The unimaginative, unintelligent and ignorant music directors seem to find nothing in their own music which would serve their purpose. They are not aware of the powers of Indian classical music which is anathema to them. I wish they would realize the magnitude of their ignorance.

In the last ultimate analysis, film music has meant a prostitution of national taste. Nothing has debased the taste of the people so much as many of these popular film songs. The producers can conveniently thrust them down the throats of their victims. Classical music is castoroilish. The other day a self-styled critic and the editor of a film magazine wrote some very uncalled for remarks about professional musicians whom be described in very insulting and scathing terms. He hurled this abuse at our musicians with a certain amount of temerity. I believe he represents the depraved mentality of some of our

film magazines which are financed and subsidised by capitalists just to carry on a campaign of mud-slinging and blackmail against decent people. Men like him must remember that the music of our films is essentially hostile to the genius of our music. No doubt, it has captured popular imagination to a great extent. But it has no enduring worth. As a kind of depraved philistinism it stands opposed to the noble dignity of our music. It has just debased national taste, and that seems to be its only function.

*Radio.* Broadcasting in India is a powerful force. Though of recent origin, it has rapidly developed into a system. The A. I. R. (All India Radio) has come to live. Its main functions are propaganda and enlightenment. It combines these two functions in a curious manner. In one hand it holds all the tools of propaganda and in the other it holds the torch of learning. One fights the war and the other holds out the olive branch of peace. The broadcasting system has a dual personality—the trumpeter and the educator both in one. It suffers from a propagandist obsession. Even in preaching middle class culture, it remains as a first class propagandist. But it is delightfully entertaining also. It

caters for its listeners. As regards educating the public, its pretensions may be many, but its achievements in this direction are negligible.

The question arises, in what way does a Radio Station serve the cause of Indian Music? I think the question is important because so many hours of music everyday on the air must have a lot to do with the future of our music. The total number of hours which Radio Stations devote to music in this country are not a negligible factor in judging the contribution which Indian broadcasting makes to our day-to-day music. So many hours of music broadcasts must have serious repercussions on present music.

Every Radio Station has its own department of music which is responsible for all the music which one hears on the air. How does this department manage its affairs? First, imagine the vast number of musicians who sing every month from a Station! About three hundred musicians are engaged by a Radio Station every month to make its music programmes a success. They are divided into various categories, but the two main groups being professionals and amateurs. It is

difficult to see how the A. I. R. manages to draw a line of demarcation between these two groups. The policy has been not to give a preferential treatment to amateurs. This cannot be made into a rigid principle because some margin must be given for the exercise of judicious discrimination. However, to a Radio Station musicians are musicians as long as they cater for its listeners.

The professional musicians also can be divided into various sub-groups, among which the most important being the professional women singers. The A. I. R. in this country entirely depends upon this class for a major percentage of its music. They are indispensable. If they were to go on a strike for a couple of days, the A. I. R. music programmes will come to a halt. They are paid rather handsomely to stick to their job. With the help of these singers, the Radio has created a clientelle of its own. Only some among these are real "Bais", the rest being second-rate or third-rate singers. It is amazing what a large number of these third-rate singers are booked by the A. I. R. every fortnight. If there are listeners who can swallow their music without getting choked the A. I. R. must be congratulated on its discovery.

There is no denying the fact that the policy of the Radio is to please and entertain its listeners. The result is that its daily programmes develop a uniform pattern. Real first class music is an expensive high-brow treat which the Radio cannot provide frequently. As a Government department the A. I. R. is not without its redtape rule. Even its music department is not free from this obsession. This department is run and controlled by one or two Programme Assistants who are very often not very competent for the job. I do not know how the A. I. R. expects these men to take charge of its music when they have had nothing to do with music all their life. Most of them have neither any background, nor training nor taste. With the exception of few, most of these programme assistants for music are least competent to manage a department.

The redtape makes its appearance here too. Programmes for all the thirty days of a month have got to be chalked out much in advance. The department is so overloaded with work that apart from a mechanical working of monthly plans, there is no scope for personal initiative and imagination to come into the forefront.

The whole thing is steeped in redtapism. There is no getting away from it.

So that is how all music plans are cooked up and pushed on to the microphone. The result is that the Radio becomes a caterer to its very core. The demands of the listeners are satisfied. It is curious that the A. I. R. most willingly assumes the responsibility of catering for its listeners but disclaims the moral responsibility of building up their taste. Observe the many novel experiments of music in which the Radio is perpetually engaged ! Mark what great results they produce ! The Radio does fulltime job and knows its customers well. It carries the day with its sentimental Geets, its oft-repeated Bhajans, its cheap Dadras and Thumris and also the Noots and Ghazals good or bad, which it never forgets to broadcast everyday. These things fetch a handsome revenue and a solid moral support from the public and the license-holder. Like a film company, the Radio banks on the support of its customers. It makes no bones about it. Its main endeavour is to provide good sentimental and spicy music to its listeners. And for providing this tinned music, the Radio makes all kinds of experiments. It

hangs its dog and gives it a good name. Look at the fine and highsounding titles and names it gives to these experiments! An orchestral composition is named as "sunset" though there is hybrid blending of morning Ragas in it. A particular Geet is entitled "Love" though it sounds like contempt. A Ghazal is also often recited or sung and given a convenient title. Or one might read in the "Indian Listener" about a music programme called as "Mahfil ka rang". One waits for the day. When the actual programme is broadcast, it just consists of second-rate and third-rate items of music which do not conjure up the atmosphere of a Mahfil. Why should the A. I. R. try to live on these sensations ? Freelance experiments and free innovations won't do. As long as the A. I. R. will try to stuff its listeners with all kinds of good and bad, sensible and sentimental varieties of music, it will only learn to exploit their curiosity.

When the A. I. R. obeys a policy laid down by its high command, it is like a dog wagging the tail. In the actual working of this Department the dog and the tail, both, disappear, only the wag remains. The A. I. R. voices a policy

when it shows its aversions to classical music. In fact, classical music lives on sufferance. I grant that the A. I. R. has not failed to popularize Indian music and Indian musicians. Apart from making them presentable, it has entertained its listeners too. But this is hardly satisfactory. The Radio in India has made no solid contribution to the development and progress of Indian music. Like the film company, the Radio knows how to entertain its listeners. But in doing so it shapes their likes and dislikes. It teaches them to develop a habitual indifference towards classical music. It does not care for that negligible minority which shouts the slogans of classical music. To please this class of listeners, the Radio puts a ban on the harmonium feigning to be shocked by the un-Indian character of the instrument and pretending to be overawed by the sacredness of classical music whose honour it must protect. The Radio shouts the slogan "The harmonium is dead". The public replies with another slogan "The harmonium is dead; long live the harmonium". What a terrific crash for Radio's sanctimonious pretensions.

On the whole, Radio music is detrimental to taste and judgment. In its actual working, it is

a free innovator indifferent to the voice of the tradition and the genius of our music. The Radio is a businessman without sentiments and it presents a scheme of music without tears. It treats music as a marketable commodity whether it is classical or popular. With its limited mental equipment, it wisely avoids making excursions into the realm of higher music. But it bungles in any case. The A. I. R. can do a lot for our music only if it has a will to do so. With its vast resources, it has a splendid opportunity for serving the music of our country. It can teach music to its listeners and help them to appreciate it better. It can engage first-rate musicians whose duty would be to train a small group of promising and talented musicians and also broadcast special music on special occasions according to an intelligent plan. It can do immense propaganda for it and also raise public opinion on this issue. But so long as it just enjoys entertaining its listeners, it will not make much progress in this direction. Let us hope for the best.

## CHAPTER VII

# SOME SUGGESTIONS

We are at the end of our brief survey. Though it is difficult to make a prophecy about the future of Hindustani classical music, it is possible to visualize it in some form in the perspective of present conditions. What it would look like fifty years hence is not only a matter of conjecture. In fact, we can envisage it with some amount of precision also. Its future will mostly depend upon the social and psychological conditions under which it will be forced to live. It seems all fine arts, today, are a product of abnormal circumstances, a consequence of an excess of living. They owe their "progress" more to the psychology of the present age than to the spontaneous urges of creative living. Classical music in this country will more and more depend for its advancement, on the psychological environment of modern Indian life. It will have to reckon with its age.

Those who talk of revolution in Indian music just do not know what they mean. In spite of

the many ultra-modern trends and tendencies which are in vogue today, classical music has not changed. Great changes have occurred and will occur but they have not made a revolution. There has been a great revival of interest in music. Propaganda and popular enlightenment have followed. As a result, self-styled rebels and innovators of all kinds have made a mess of our music. But all this does not amount to a revolution. Fads and fashions have touched only the outer skin of our day-to-day music, and not the sensitive flesh of its historic genius. The soul of Indian classical music has driven back superficial modernity to its fashionable haunts. It has resisted and defeated the invasion of all bastard tendencies.

New talents cannot be a substitute for genius, but if they are real talents, they have their place and are not to be ignored. Temporary phases cannot assume permanent features. Even the most brilliant innovations often fail to come up to the level of creative art. The momentum of activities in the general popularization of art is, often, a deceptive sign. Things may just flash and fade away. Revolution in art cannot be brought about by external circumstances.

It must have its own roots. No revolution has occurred in modern Indian music, as people often contend. There is surely, anarchy but no revolution. Take a thing like the modern revival of dance of which Udai Shanker has been called the chief prophet. What an unnecessary fuss people have made about Udai Shanker's "epoch-making" dances! He is a very talented and imaginative dancer who carries with him his education and culture. He has fine ideas and he is an excellent organizer. He has succeeded in bringing Kathakali and other forms to the stage in an artistic manner. In trying to keep abreast of times, he has evolved new dance-themes representing certain phases of modern life. I do not think these have any permanent value, apart from being topical. Even some of those dances, in which he tries to represent certain modern ideas, may not last long. He does not have the touch of artists like Isadora Duncan and Pavalova.

I have not been able to understand Udai Shanker's prejudices in matters of art. A dancer who would search for material among the primitive folk dances of hill tribes can be called an honest seeker. But I am surprised at his strong

aversion for Kathak style. At his Centre in Almora there was no provision for training in the art of Kathak dances. He himself cannot dance it and he has also not included it in his scheme of special training. He has almost tabooed it and is mentally in quarantine against it. There can be only two reasons for his indifference towards it. Either he is ignorant of it or he does not like it. It is difficult to believe that he does not know what Kathak is, though it is possible he does not realize its intrinsic merits. It is just possible, he does not like it because he does not want to learn it. It takes years to be a Kathak dancer and Udai Shanker has not the time to learn it now when he has achieved so much in one direction. But surely he cannot call it just mere "footwork." The Kathak is the dance of Hindusthan and is intimately associated with the traditions of Hindusthani music. It is centred in the immortal theme of Radha and Krishna. For almost a century now it has prevailed all over India and has established a school of thought which is universally recognized.

Udai Shanker's achievements may have been brilliant but they have not brought about any

revolution in modern dance. Even other modern and ultra-modern forms and varieties of music have not brought about any revolution. Every revolution depends on the destruction of an old order. Unless there is a total denial of old values, new values do not arise. Such a complete usurpation of old values is the first condition of a real revolution. Man does not destroy overnight the image of all his yesterdays to build up the ideal of all his tomorrows. Every revolution is the consummation of some organic disruptions. Revolutions in fine arts are rare phenomena. I do not think the present day large-scale activities of music institutions and music organisations have the vitality to bring about a revolution in modern music. We are only passing through a phase of intense activity which is not stimulated by any revolutionary urges. The new modes of expression and the ultra-modern varieties of the music of today cannot destroy the spirit of our historic music. This is not a plea for a conservative approach to classical music, but a plea for sanity and commonsense in discussing it. All great things in the world are conservative in the sense that they preserve old values which are also permanent values. If there is anything like a

new order in our music, it can only be treated as a temporary phase. Mere talent cannot replace genius. What was built in centuries cannot be destroyed in a decade. And I take it for granted that the new modes of expression and the new compositions of modern music are just attractive innovations and nothing more. They cannot take the place of classical music. No improvised art can be a fit substitute for genuine first-rate art. Mere sex-appeal and clever skill cannot usurp a music whose passions are human and whose art is great.

Another misconception which prevails among the general public, today, is that classical music is passing through a phase of unprecedented progress. People feel that revival has given birth to progress. I do not think this is a correct estimate of the present condition of classical music. The genius of our music is on the decline. Its creative spirit is becoming less and less articulate every day. With the great traditions of the past have disappeared the great musicians of the past. Our achievements today cannot be compared to the splendid achievements of the past. The mahfil of the past has disappeared and its place has been taken by the conventional drawing-room

and the prosaic and almost impersonal platform of a public hall. The highly sensitive and appreciative audience of the good old time has been replaced by the listening mob of today which is characterized by snobbery, sophistication and aesthetic un-concern. The great masters have gone leaving their rich legacy to good and bad inheritors. The past had high standards; the present has set up its own. Good judgment and good taste have definitely deteriorated. The modern democracy in music has brought about a kind of anarchy which is opposed to the age-long aristocracy of refined taste. Modern revival of music has let loose forces of disruption in the sphere of appreciation. We do not want many freelance proletarians in our music because they cannot do much for it. The progress of our music depends on other factors.

In this book my intention has not been to paint Hindusthani Classical music as a conservative no-changer. No art can remain inert and static. A great deal of our music has changed with times but it has almost invariably refused to be the servile mouthpiece and propagandist of the idiosyncrasies of this age. While it has adapted itself to each important

epoch of Indian history, it has retained its identity and preserved its living personality. It has had its periods of blossoming and decadance both, but through whatever vicissitudes it passed, it retained its character. On principle, its creative soul has never compromised or surrendered. In its essence, it has always been the same. Changes may have altered its external features but its soul remains the same.

Therefore, when people talk of evolving a progressive music, today, it sounds enigmatic to me. I think it is a craze with some to give "progressive" versions of all conceivable things. There is that great mania for progressive literature. I grant, this movement has proved quite fruitful but there have been instances when authors have exploited it in the wrong way. But even then the intentions of this movement are noble. But when we come to think of what is called progressive music, we are puzzled. If by progressive music we mean all kinds of new varieties of cheap and popular music which exist today, the suggestion itself is outrageous. Again, if we mean by it the output of music institutions and art centres, the suggestion is preposterous. I am not aware of

any real modern progressive art in Indian music. Those who talk of it in such an irresponsible manner, know nothing about it. In fact they only mean by it decadence and sentimentality in which a good deal of our ultra-modern music has specialized.

We need not unnecessarily attach this epithet to our music. Classical music still lies somewhat unexplored. Its dormant powers have still to be discovered and stimulated. One thing we must remember and it is that our music has great powers and that it has a spirit of catholicity. It has a generous heart and it always embraces all varieties of folk music and popular music which have been tested by them. Some are its children and some are its ancestors. But it raises a bulwark of conservatism against the onslaught of fantastic fads which are foreign to its spirit. This is what the uninitiated layman and the average music-lover must remember. Classical music provides a vast scope for the interpretation of every human idea and emotion. Why do they not explore its powers ? The man who goes mad over film-music does not realize that if attempts are made classical music can produce much higher effects. The other day I had an

interesting discussion about film-music with a well-known film producer. In reply to my strong plea for good music in Indian films, he said, "What we want is money. The present film-music may be bad but it gives us heavy dividends. We have hardly any time to worry about good classical music. We do not have the least desire to experiment with it just to explore its wonderful possibilities. We can do without them. What we want is music which pays us". These outspoken words were very significant.

The future of classical music does not seem to be bright. But those who are optimists believe that since history has wrought many a miracle before, it may repeat this process in future. Men of genius may again be born and classical music may again reach great heights. Posterity will wait and see. But in the meantime we shall have to do our best for preserving and keeping alive the best that is in our ancient music. We cannot let the old dispensation die because inwardly, as a race, we cling to it with all our faith. The old order of classical music must not die. The new order, which can be summed up in two words, glamour and feeling, has not much

spiritual content. Of course, it must be pointed out that the progress of every art depends upon spontaneous efforts. What is called creative spirit builds up every new renaissance. Artificial devices like propaganda do not lend any impetus to the soul of genius. Inspiration in its essence is pure spontaneity. A time may come when our musicians may again be inspired to produce great music. In the meantime they will have to adapt themselves to modern conditions as far as this process does not amount to a sacrifice of their cardinal principles and a liquidation of their art. Classical music leaves a margin for all healthy tendencies which spring up in every music.

What suggestions can we make to remedy the situation ? No patent ready-made recipe would do. But some measures can be adopted for the revival and preservation of our music. Then alone we can think of educating public opinion in this matter. Here are some :

1. We must preserve the music of the old Gharanas some of which exist today in India. This cannot be done only by collecting a few hundred compositions and writing their notation. This is not enough. The representatives

of these illustrious families should be given all encouragement, sympathy and help to preserve their art. Intelligent and imaginative students of music, who have a genuine desire for learning these styles, must sit at the feet of distinguished masters. When educated people allege that musicians do not impart their knowledge to others, they are not always fair. How many of them possess the necessary talent and patience to learn from musicians ? One cannot expect to become a musician by learning music casually and half-heartedly from them. The members and descendants of these Gharanas should be given all facilities for imparting their knowledge to all sincere aspirants. Students who pass out from music schools should not become self-centred and self-sufficient in their outlook. In fact, they should continue their study of music under the far better supervision of good musicians. They should learn to appreciate and adopt their methods of learning music which are far superior to the methods employed in music institutions.

2. Why do people expect so much from musicians when they deny their social status and economic security ? What

right has middle class society or the new aristocracy of today to treat musicians as mere wage-earners and entertainers? What facilities are we providing them for a simple economic existence? Dozens of them are starving without a decent provision for their children. What is society doing for them? First, there should be a strong public opinion on the matter of granting an equality of status to musicians in general and removing all bans which conventional respectability has put on them. This is very necessary. Second, patrons of music, music-societies and organisations and the general public all—should raise and establish funds for ameliorating the financial distress of unemployed, poor and old and decrepit musicians. This may sound so much of a dream, but unless we do this, we cannot respect our musicians.

3. There should be an All-India Academy of Music whose status should be equal to the status of Academies in the West. Once it is established it will build up its own traditions. Why do we need it? It will be an All-India Body whose contributions in scholarship and research will be considered first-rate and undisputed. Scholars and musicians shall be employed for carrying on

research in the various important fields of music and their contributions should be published and given the widest publicity. An All-India journal of music should be the official organ of this Academy. The decision of the Academy should be considered final and binding on all who agree with the noble aims and who lend it their fullest moral support. What we need in our music today is a tribunal which would have the efficiency and authority to pass a verdict on all controversies and problems which arise. We would not have so many conflicting opinions about Ragas, compositions, styles, and musicians if we had such a final authority in India. Among musicians, offenders of all classes, casual, occasional, habitual and conventional, would respect the authority of such a tribunal. The Government and the public, both, should be able to finance and support this Academy.

4. Mass education in classical music is impossible. Large-scale propaganda of classical music is good but it cannot take the place of any real education in music. I wish our music institutions would stop busying themselves only in a large-scale production of third-rate amateur musicians. If their work can be intensive and

concentrated, confined to small groups of students, and if they revive some of the older individual methods of teaching, they would do better work. It is better to have a dozen good, well-trained, educated musicians than to have a multitude of music graduates who cannot be called musicians by any stretch of imagination.

5. Public opinion must be raised on the important issue of classical music. The public in general treats it rather in a cavalier fashion. The press in India only records occasional speeches on music and reports some of the important music functions which are held here and there. In matters of fine arts the Indian press does not seem to have a keen conscience. I believe the press can do a lot in this matter. Even our scholars and thinkers, who can excite public conscience on this issue, conveniently forget all about it. A strong public opinion on music would be an asset.

6. The patronage of the Government is equally necessary. The Government spends huge sums of money on arts and crafts and archaeology but seems to be indifferent to the ancient music of this country. Music is now one of the important subjects in the syllabus. A

time may come when it may become a necessary part of education. But no Provincial Government realizes its importance. Some years ago, a certain Director of Public Instruction in U. P. made a public statement saying " Music is a luxury which the Government cannot support ". If the Government of India can allow a Department of Broadcasting to exist which controls more than half-a-dozen Radio Stations which broadcast many hours of music programmes, it can also appoint a Commission to study problems and conditions of Indian Music which apply to Radio music. If dozens of men can be appointed to look after the music of Radio Stations, why should not the Government appoint a Bureau of music research ? If a Historical Records Commission can exist, why cannot a similar permanent music commission be established ?

7. Public opinion should be raised against cheap sentimental music, so that there should be no further deterioration in public taste. Whatever slogans we might have to shout, we should feel honour-bound to raise our protest against varieties of cheap music which inject into the veins of the Indian youth the poison of inertia

and morbid sentimentality. This seems a difficult task but not an impossible one. Also organisations like Film-goers' Music Association and Radio Listeners' Music Association can be established on provincial basis to fight against all third-rate Radio music and all cheap film-music. Too much of sentimental music leads to mass neurasthenia.

8. There should be an All-India Gayak Mandal or Musicians' Association whose two aims would be first, to bring musicians of different schools of thought closer to each other and second, to vindicate their rights. This association will be a Musicians' Body which will express the opinions of musicians in every matter. This should be something like the Trade Union of musicians who would fight for their rights.

9. There should be a movement in this country for organising amateur talents. The need for it is becoming greater day by day. The amateur musicians alone have the splendid opportunity to inherit the traditions of ancient music and to become the rightful claimant of the legacy of the great masters. They have both

intelligence and education. But they must learn how to utilise them in music. Those who have a real passion for music, will learn it from well-known musicians. A movement like this can assume great importance if there is an All-India Amateur Musicians' Association which would work for the benefit and rights of amateurs. Such an organisation will be a source of inspiration and strength to dozens of talented persons of both sexes who will not only become good musicians but will also work for the good of music as they would fight against all its evils and injustices.

10. In the past the Indian States have been the greatest patrons of classical music. Even today, States like Baroda, Mysore, Gwalior, Rampur, Kashmir, Patiala and others patronize it in their own way. But Indian States today are generally quite indifferent to the development of Indian fine arts, specially music. The princes, today, prefer the luxury of dabbling in politics and polo to everything else. If our States, which were once important centres of music, again become sincere patrons of classical music, much of it would be revived, preserved and transmitted. Every State which has set up popular

administration and provides good education to its subjects, should also patronize music and give it an impetus which every national art deserves. If enlightened Indian States join hands with the general public in reviving and preserving it, many wonderful results would follow.

11. All attempts to keep alive classical music would be futile unless our musicians lend them their fullest co-operation and moral support. They must mentally keep pace with times, which means, they should gradually reconcile themselves to modern conditions by making adjustments when it is possible and judicious to do so. They need not give up their time-honoured concepts and principles. They need not slavishly surrender themselves to abnormal circumstances because, essentially, they are heroes and martyrs. But they must realistically fit into the framework of modern life and also study the social and psychological conditions under which they live. They should become the living citizens of a living society. Every effort should be made to help them to do so. We do not want an adult literacy campaign for "unlettered" musicians. That won't do. What we want is a workable scheme by which we would educate them in the

art of appreciating the background of modern life. As long as they would be counted among the "Have-nots" of society and victims of social ostracism, they would only constitute a segregated community. We must help them to realize under what different conditions they live today. And yet they must march on as the torch-bearers of an ancient tradition. We won't let our prophets perish in an age of propaganda.